1,000 SMILES

Find Your Happy!

HEARTWARMING STORIES THAT'LL RESTORE YOUR FAITH IN HUMANITY

GOOD NEWS AND POSITIVE CHANGE JUST OVER THE HORIZON

JOKES AND RIDDLES AND OTHER CASUAL FUN

DRAW JOY OUT OF EVERYDAY MOMENTS WITH MINDFULNESS

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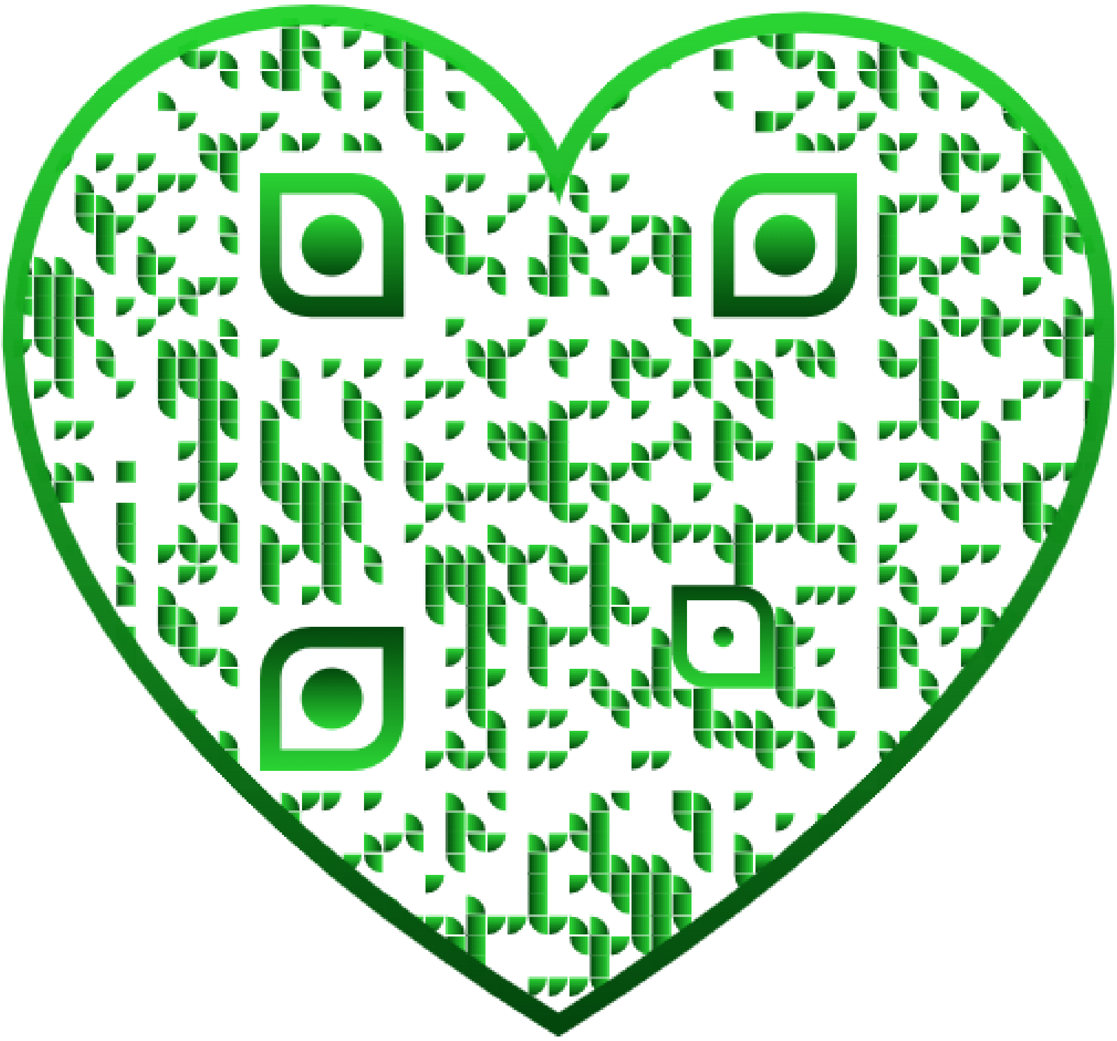
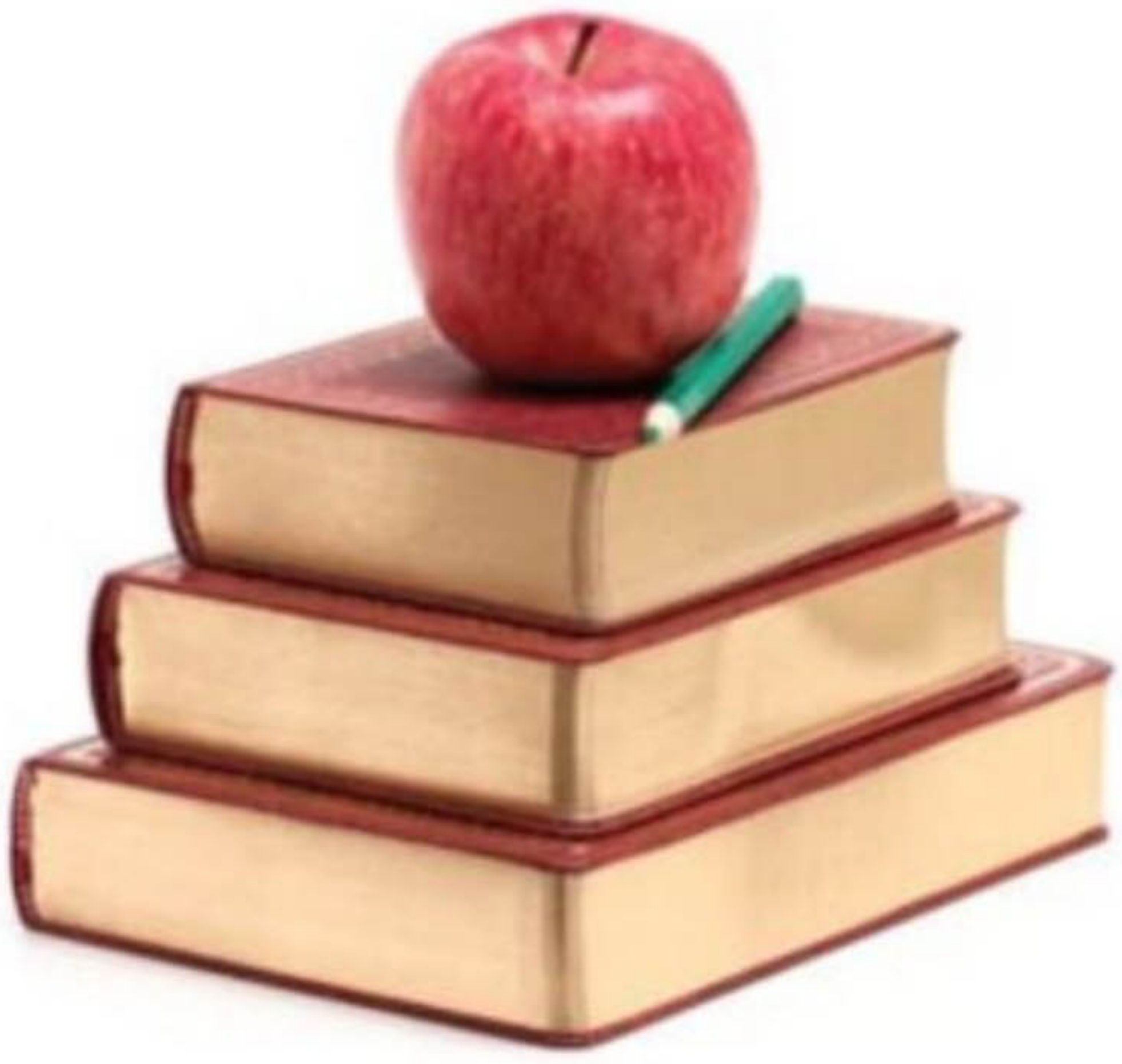
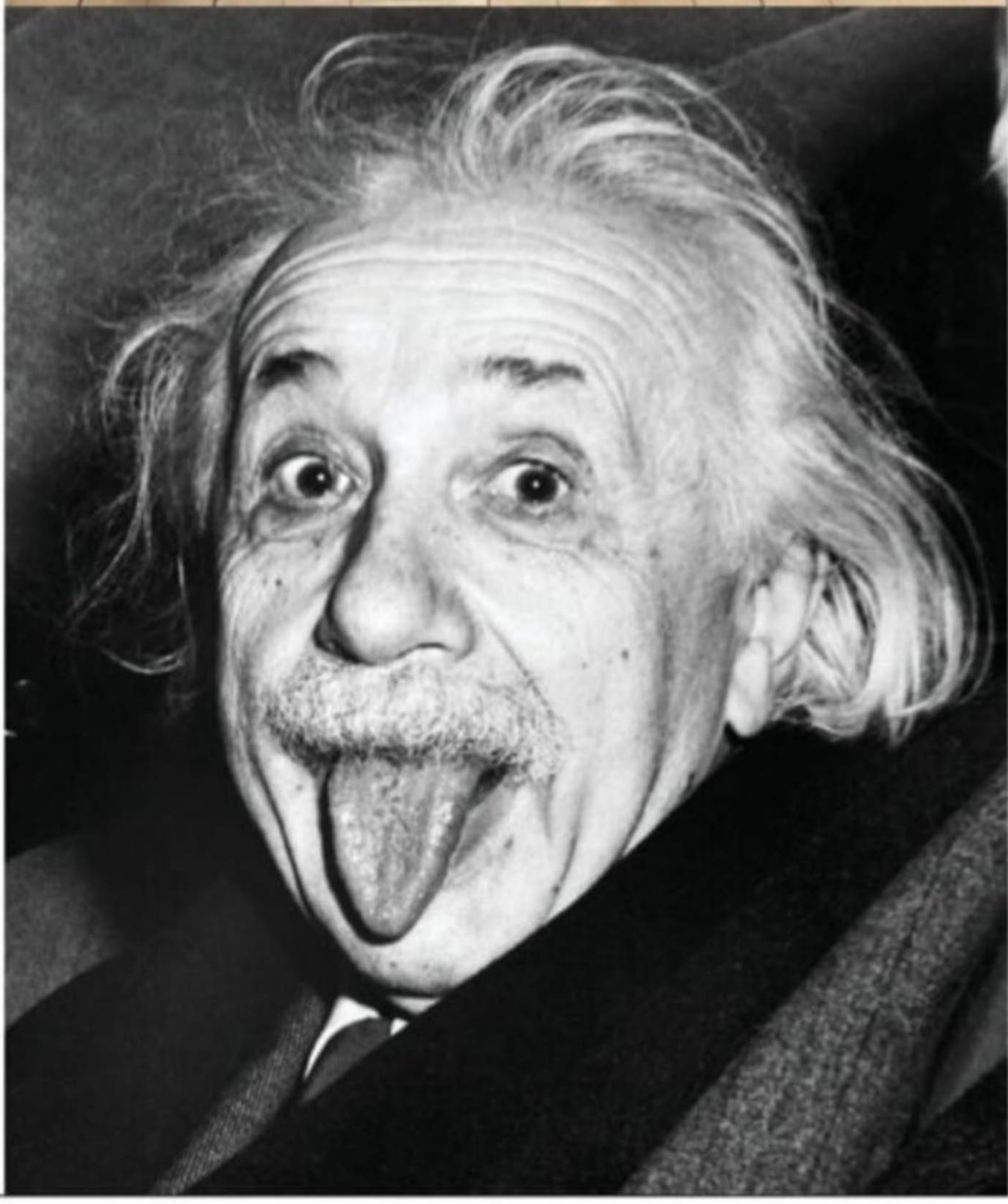


“IF YOU SEE SOMEONE WITHOUT A SMILE, GIVE THEM ONE OF YOURS.”

–DOLLY PARTON





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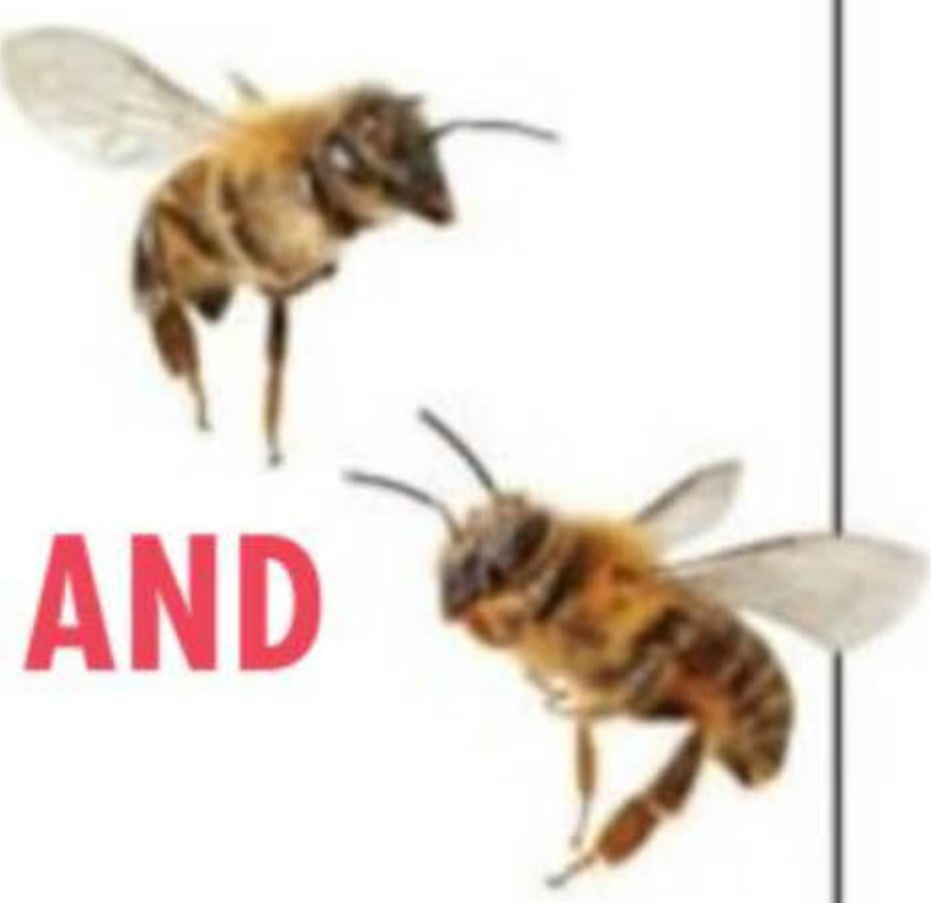

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Introduction

HAPPINESS STARTS NOW

STORIES OF TRIUMPH, RESILIENCE, AND HAPPINESS AREN'T JUST NICE—THEY'RE NECESSARY

We live in a world that can feel overwhelming. Turn on the news, scroll through social media, or chat with friends, and you might think everything's falling apart. Wars rage, economies wobble, and climate concerns loom large. But here's the thing about darkness—it makes the light shine even brighter. In every corner of our world, people are finding their purpose, achieving impossible dreams, overcoming devastating odds, and finding reasons to smile so big their cheeks hurt. What this magazine is filled with aren't just feel-good stories to distract us from reality; they're proof that joy persists, that human resilience knows no bounds, and that hope isn't just some flimsy concept we cling to—it's real.

Sharing stories of triumph, connection, and pure, unbridled happiness isn't just nice, it's essential. Science backs this up: positive stories can lower stress levels, boost our immune systems, and even make us more likely to help others. When we read about someone else's moment of victory, our brains light up as if we're experiencing it ourselves. In the pages that follow, you'll meet the teenager who built a windmill to bring electricity to his impoverished village, a 90-year-old grandmother who ran a record-breaking half-marathon, a prison choir group, and so many more incredible people. These stories are proof that every single day, ordinary people are doing extraordinary things—not because they're special or privileged, but because they refused to give up on themselves.

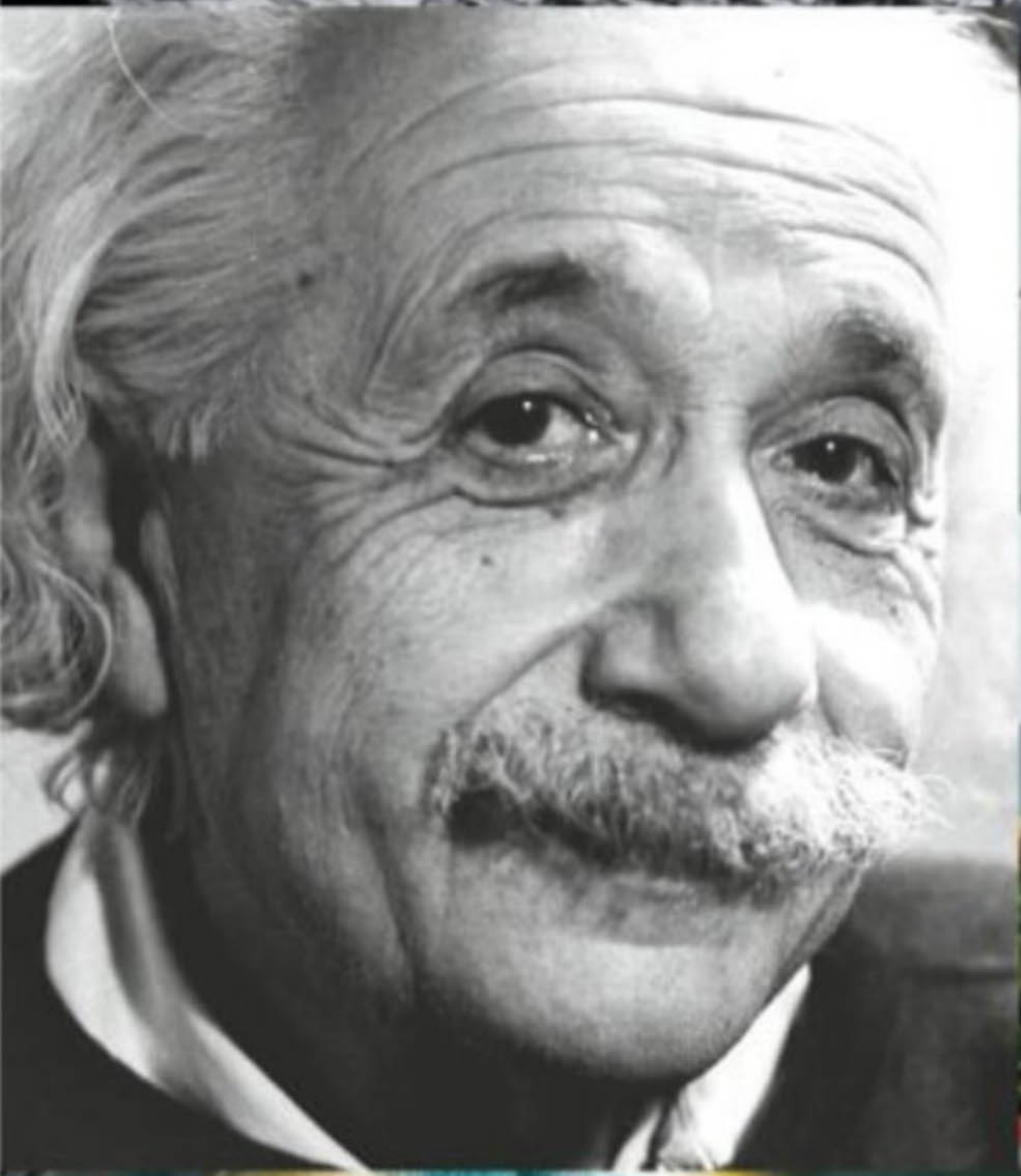
But happiness isn't just about big moments—it's in the small joys, too. You'll also find a collection of head-scratching, laughter-inducing riddles, jokes that beg to be shared at the dinner table, little suggestions to make your daily routine sunnier, and tiny observations to perk up your mood when you need it most. Think of this as your happiness toolkit: a reminder that joy isn't something to chase after—it's already here, just waiting to be noticed.

Amazing STORIES FROM AMAZING *People*

GET INSPIRED BY THESE REAL-LIFE TALES OF PERSISTENCE, CREATIVITY, AND GENEROSITY

In a world that often feels dragged down by heavy headlines, there are stories that show us just how far the human spirit can soar. Take Aaryan Shukla, a 14-year-old from Maharashtra, India, who shattered six world records in a single day with his lightning-fast mental calculations (page 10), or William Kamkwamba, who at just 14 built a windmill from scrap parts to power his family's home in Malawi during a devastating drought (page 24). They're tales of triumph, but they're also proof that extraordinary achievements often spring from ordinary beginnings.

Behind every groundbreaking moment, there's a person who refused to accept limitations. For example, Genevieve Via Cava spent 45 years teaching, all while quietly saving a fortune that she left to fund scholarships for special needs students (page 22). From Madam C.J. Walker's rise to millionaire (page 12) to Rosa Parks' courage that sparked a movement (page 14), these stories remind us that the most powerful force for change isn't just the loudest voice—it's the most persistent one.



boursin

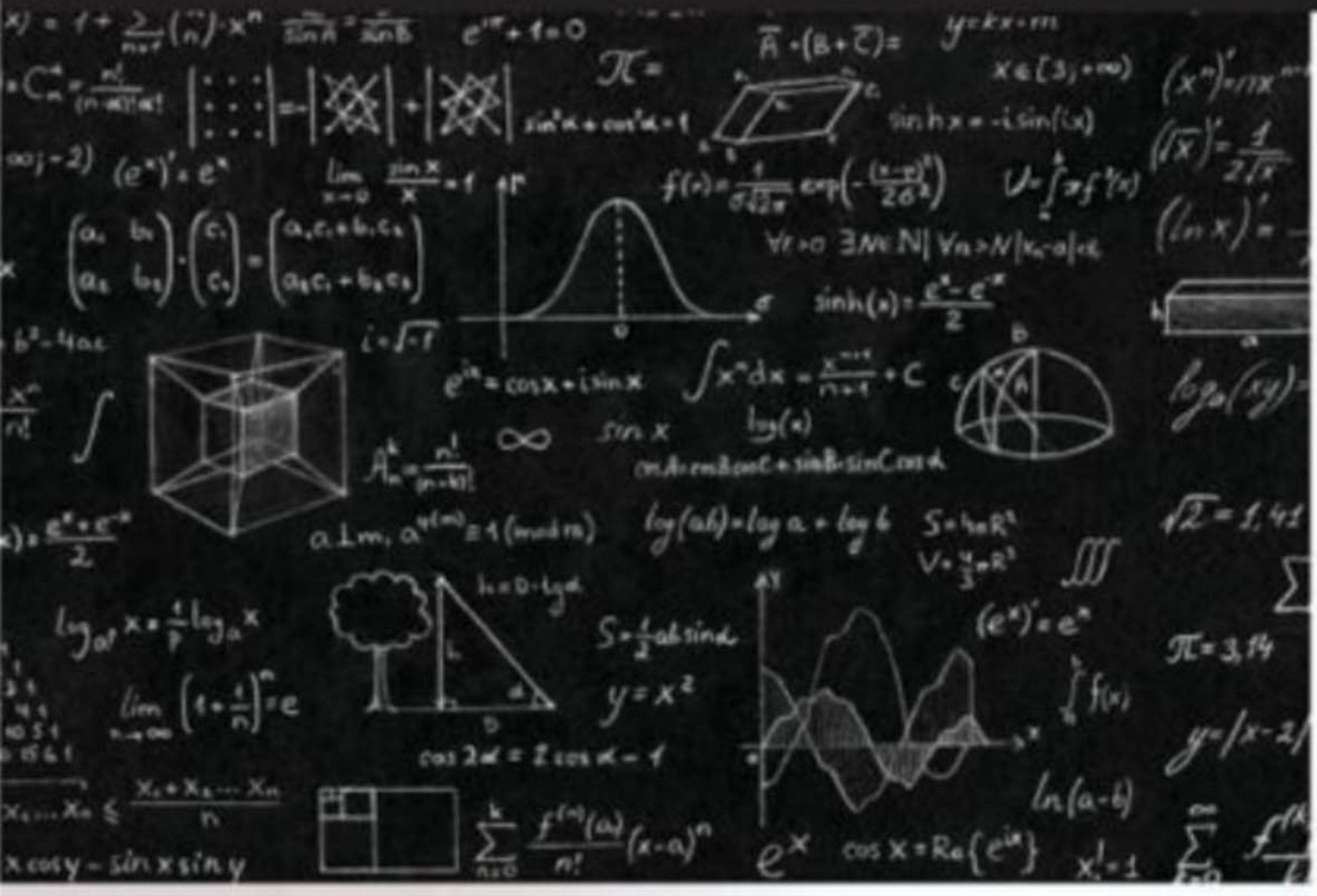
GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS
CERTIFICATE
Fastest time
to mentally multiply
two eight-digit numbers
was achieved by
Aaryan Shukla (India)
in Dubai, United Arab Emirates
on 4 December 2024
OFFICIALLY AMAZING
RECORD HOLDER

THE HUMAN CALCULATOR

MEET THE BOY WHO BROKE SIX MATHEMATICAL WORLD RECORDS IN ONE DAY

Something extraordinary happened in Dubai in February 2025. A 14-year-old from Maharashtra, India, named Aaryan Shukla walked into an event hosted by Guinness World Records and did what most people would consider impossible: He broke six world records in mental mathematics in a single day. In just 30.9 seconds, Shukla added 100 four-digit numbers in his head. Then he tackled 50 five-digit numbers, solving them in an incredible 25.19 seconds. Drawing from Vedic Mathematics, an ancient Indian system of calculation, he then went on to set new world records in multiplication and division as well. Each feat was carefully verified by Guinness World Records officials, who watched in person as amazing mathematical history unfolded.

Shukla's affinity for these incredible feats started when Shukla was six years old—the age when most kids are just learning basic addition. He began exploring mental math on his own, and over the years, turned his natural interest into something remarkable. No special programs, no elite training centers—just dedication, practice, and a fascina-



tion with numbers. He credits his success in part to yoga: "Sahaja Yoga meditation helps me to keep calm and focused," Shukla told *People* magazine.

While most of us reach for our phones to solve even simple math problems, Shukla shows us what the human mind can really do with numbers. His achievements are all documented and verified, proving that sometimes reality is more impressive than fiction. "We are a normal family," his father admitted in an interview with Guinness. "Aaryan is a one in a billion kind of person." He practices every day, showing young people everywhere what's possible with dedication and focus.

Aaryan Shukla is a founding board member of the Global Mental Calculators Association and a two-time champion of the Mental Calculation World Cup.

THE HALF-MARATHON GRANNY

AT 90 YEARS OLD, THIS DETERMINED RUNNER SET AN UNPRECEDENTED RECORD

On a crisp September morning in 2023, 90-year-old Dot Sowerby laced up her running shoes and made history at the Life Time Chicago Half Marathon. The Greensboro, North Carolina, resident crossed the finish line in an impressive three hours, 33 minutes, and 47 seconds, setting an American women's record for the 90-to-94 age group. What makes her achievement even more remarkable is that the race organizers initially hadn't even planned to have any competitors in her age bracket—the existing age groups ended way back at 70. "After the race, I was just so exhilarated," she told *Women's Running*. "I didn't feel tired, nothing hurt, and for that whole day, I wasn't even sore or tired. The next day I was a little sore, but for the most part I was fine!"

Sowerby's path to glory wasn't a lifelong journey—she didn't start competing in running events until age 50. Her dedication to the sport has since earned her numerous accolades, including a world record in the 1,500 meters at the USATF Masters Outdoor Championships just months before her half-marathon triumph. "If it were me, I wouldn't tell anyone I was going to try to do this long distance race in case I couldn't make it, but she does the opposite—she tells everyone, contacts the race organizers, you name it," explained her son, Jim Sowerby, in an interview with *Women's Running*. "She trained methodically, waking up early each week as she did longer runs in the dark around the retirement village. Running this half marathon was a really a new evolution, at 90, in her running repertoire." What's the secret to her success? She says a diet rich in liver and raw vegetables like broccoli and cauliflower.

THE FIRST FEMALE SELF-MADE MILLIONAIRE

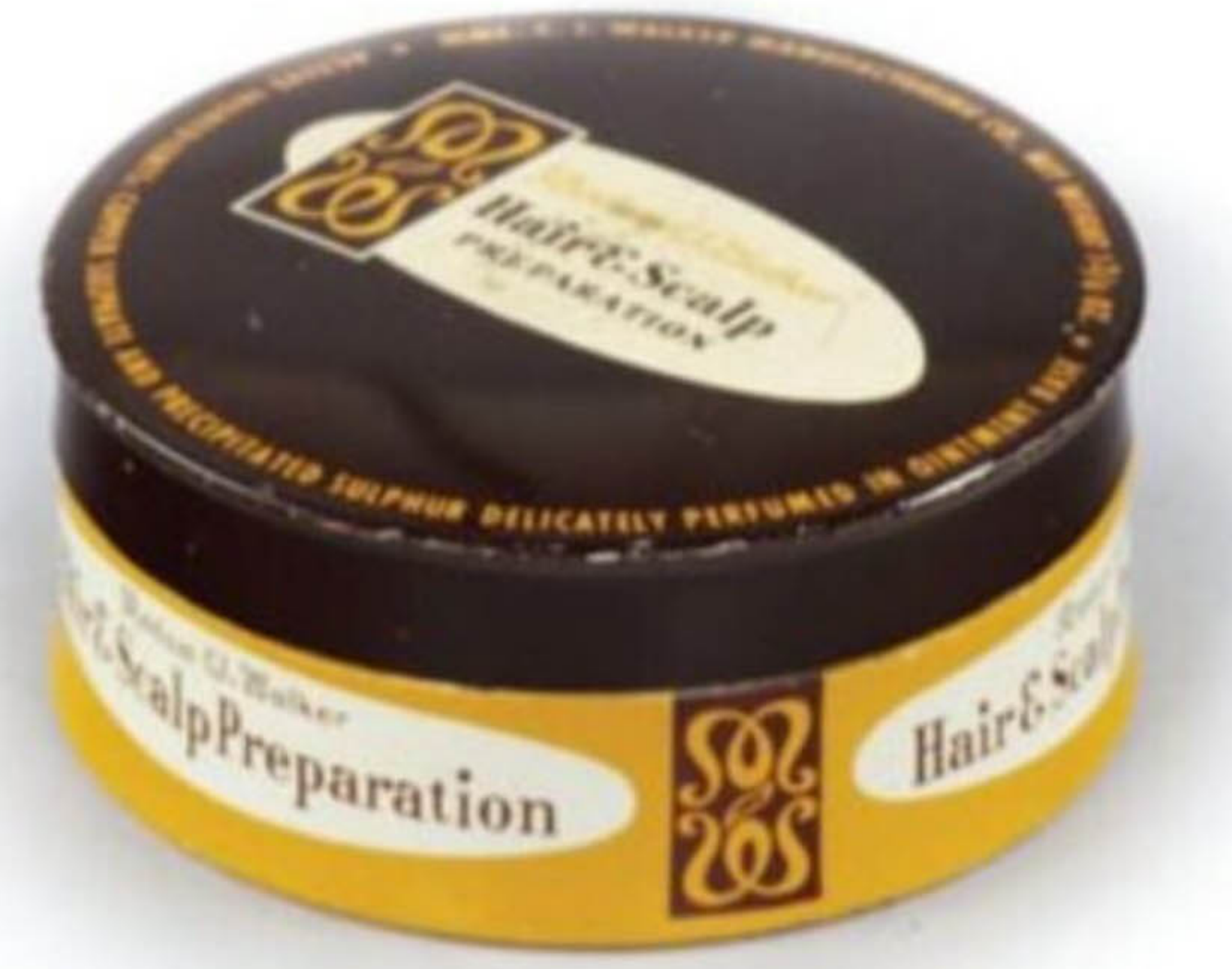
A DAUGHTER OF FORMER SLAVES BUILDS A BEAUTY EMPIRE

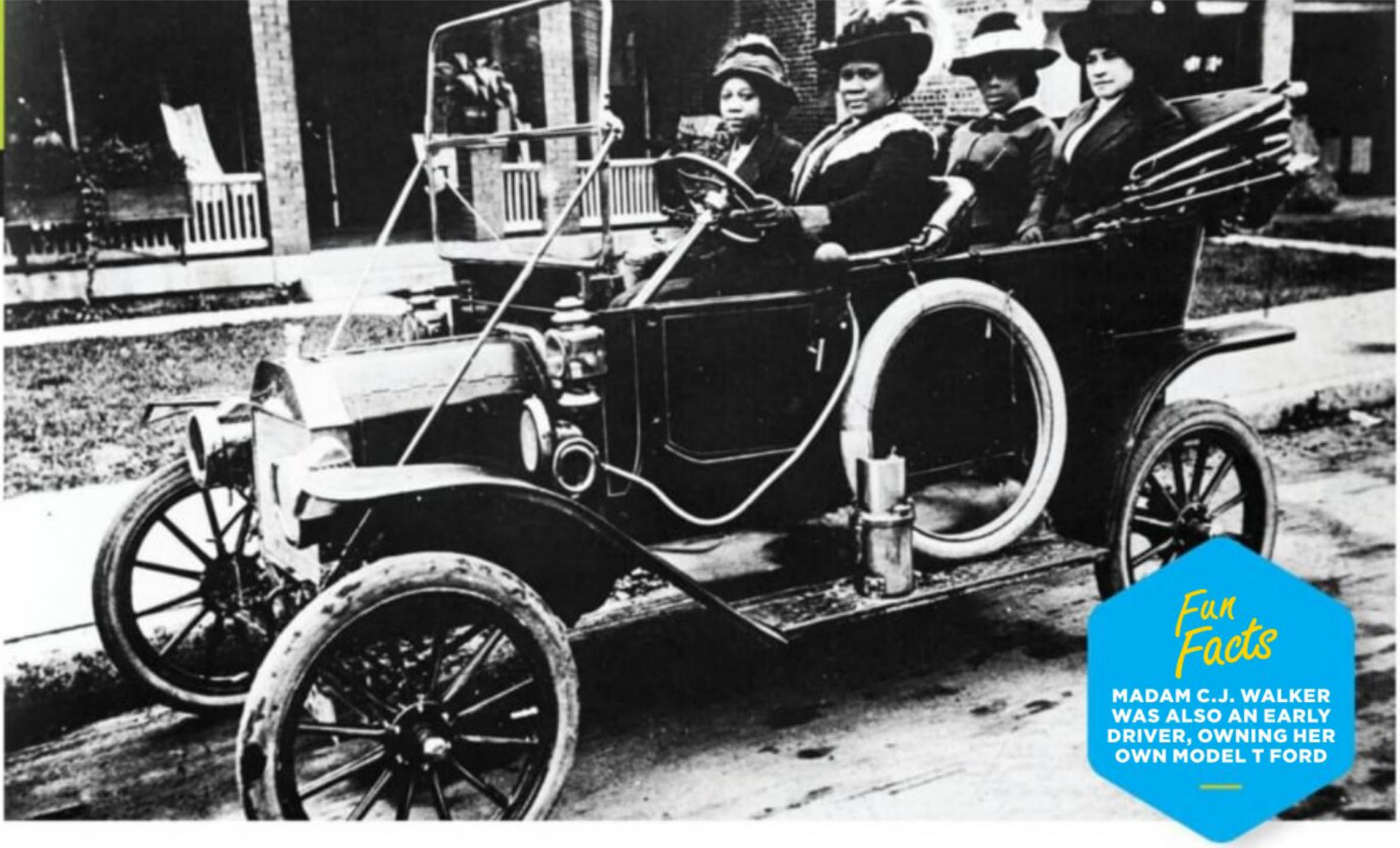
In 1906, a product hit the market that would change both the beauty industry and American history: Madam Walker's Wonderful Hair Grower. Sarah Breedlove, who would later become known as Madam C.J. Walker, developed this revolutionary hair care solution after experiencing her own struggles with hair loss in the 1890s. The formula was specifically designed to address the unique hair care needs of Black women. Applied directly to the scalp, the product helped heal scalp ailments, reduce dandruff, and promote healthier hair growth, addressing problems that many other products of the time simply couldn't solve.

What started as a door-to-door operation in Denver, CO quickly transformed into a thriving enterprise. Walker's approach wasn't merely about selling a product—she created an entire hair care system. Known as the Walker System, it combined her special pomade with scalp preparation techniques and the use of heated combs. She trained thousands of women, dubbed Walker Agents, who not only sold her products but also learned proper hair care techniques they could teach to others. These agents, earning wages well above what was typical for Black women at the time, became ambassadors of both beauty and economic independence. "I want my agents to feel that their first duty is to humanity," Walker said at the first national convention of the Madam C.J. Walker Beauty Culturists Union in 1917. "I shall expect to find my agents taking the lead not only in operating a successful business, but in every movement in the interest of our colored citizenship."

The success of Madam Walker's Wonderful Hair Grower catapulted its creator from washerwoman to wealthy entrepreneur in just a few short years. By 1910, the Madam C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company was thriving, with a state-of-the-art factory in Indianapolis producing hair care products that were shipped across the United States. Walker's business acumen was remarkable: She understood the power of advertising, investing heavily in African American newspapers as soon

The formula contained ingredients like sulfur, sulfate, beeswax, and coconut oil (with a touch of violet extract to mask the sulfur's smell).





Fun Facts

MADAM C.J. WALKER WAS ALSO AN EARLY DRIVER, OWNING HER OWN MODEL T FORD

BY 1910, THE MADAM C.J. WALKER MANUFACTURING COMPANY WAS THRIVING.

as product sales came in. She also gave compelling product demonstrations in churches and community groups, making her marketing both personal and culturally relevant to her target audience. Her focus on brand building and creating a strong sales force came long before these became standard business practices.

What made Walker's achievement even more extraordinary was the context of her success. Born to former slaves just after the Civil War, she built her empire during the height of Jim Crow laws and severe racial discrimination. "The agents did charity work in their communities. They produced a resolution against lynching, so there was an activist element to it where they were collectively raising their voices as Black women," explained Dr. Tyrone Freeman, associate professor of philanthropic studies at Indiana University, in an article for the IU School of Philanthropy's website. By the time of her death in 1919, Walker had become the first self-made female millionaire in America. Her success wasn't only measured in money; she employed thousands of Black women, contributed generously to educational causes and civil rights organizations, and created a blueprint for future entrepreneurs, regardless of their gender or race.

THE WOMAN DETERMINED TO FLY

• **WHEN KATHERINE** Sui Fun Cheung first laid eyes on an airplane in Los Angeles in 1931, she saw her future. The young Chinese immigrant, who'd moved to California to enroll in music studies, traded her piano lessons for flight training instead and dove headfirst into aviation. After just 12.5 hours of training—half the usual time—she completed her first solo flight. By 1932, at age 26, she'd earned her full pilot's license, becoming the first Chinese American woman to legally take to the skies.

In an era when barely one percent of all American pilots were women, Cheung soared past those gender barriers with remarkable style. She mastered difficult flying stunts like loops and barrel rolls, performed on her own at professional air shows, and in 1935, became the first Chinese woman to earn an international flying license. While some called her the Chinese Amelia Earhart, she carved out her own unique legacy as a pioneer, inspiring a generation of Asian Americans to pursue their dreams, no matter how high. As she said, "I don't see any reason why a Chinese woman can't be as good a pilot as anyone else. We drive automobiles—why not fly planes?"

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THE POWER OF STANDING YOUR GROUND

FOUR STORIES OF UNWAVERING PERSISTENCE AGAINST EXTREME PUSHBACK

History remembers Rosa Parks as the woman who refused to move to the back of a Montgomery bus, but the full story reveals much more—she was a seasoned civil rights activist who made a decision that would reshape America. Before that fateful December day in 1955, Parks had spent over a decade as the secretary of the Montgomery NAACP, meticulously documenting racial discrimination and investigating crimes against Black citizens. "When that white driver stepped back toward us, when he waved his hand and ordered us up and out of our seats, I felt a determination cover my body like a quilt on a winter night," she told author Wayne Greenhaw for CNN. Her arrest sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott—where around 40,000 Black citizens boycotted the buses on December 5th alone (the day of her trial)—demonstrating how peaceful resistance could create change. Her stand wasn't a spontaneous act; it was the culmination of years facing systematic injustice.

The 1970s brought another remarkable example of moral courage. New York Police Department officer Frank Serpico became the first police officer in the department's history to break the blue wall of silence and testify about widespread corruption and payoffs. The consequences were severe: He was shot in the face during a drug raid where his fellow officers allegedly abandoned him. Yet Serpico persisted. His testimony led to the formation of the Knapp Commission and sparked reforms in police departments across the country, proving that one person's commitment to truth could reform even the most entrenched systems. "The fight for justice against corruption is never easy," Serpico said in an interview with *Whistleblower Network News*. "It never has been and never will be. It exacts a toll on ourself, our families, our friends, and especially our children. In the end, I believe, as in my case, the price we pay is well worth holding on to our dignity."

The fight for workplace equality found a new champion in Lilly Ledbetter, who discovered in 1998 through an anonymous note that she had been paid significantly less than her male counterparts during her 19-year career at Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company. Rather than accepting this disparity as "the way things are done," she pursued a discrimination lawsuit that reached the Supreme Court. Though she lost that initial battle due to a statute of limitations, her persistence led to lasting change. Her efforts culminated in the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, the first bill President Barack Obama signed into law, which ensures workers can challenge unfair pay at any point during their employment.

The story of Erin Brockovich demonstrated how persistence could force a corporate giant to answer for its misdeeds. Working as a legal clerk without formal law credentials, she uncovered that Pacific Gas & Electric had contaminated the drinking water in Hinkley, California with the carcinogenic chemical hexavalent chromium and lied to residents about it. Despite institutional resistance and initial skepticism, her investigation led to a historic $333 million settlement for more than 600 residents: the largest direct-action settlement in U.S. history at the time. Her story demonstrates that expertise isn't a prerequisite for pursuing justice; unwavering determination and commitment to truth can sometimes be all you need.

Fun Facts

BROCKOVICH WAS HOSPITALIZED FOR CHEMICAL EXPOSURE, BUT STILL DIDN'T QUIT

The 2000 movie Erin Brockovich is based on her true story; Julia Roberts plays Brockovich in the film.

HAPPY ACCIDENTS

HOW SPILLS, INCONVENIENCES, AND IMPROVISATIONS CHANGED THE WORLD

We tend to think of great inventions as the result of careful planning and deliberate experimentation. But here's something fascinating: "A surprising number of important discoveries and inventions are associated with stories about spillage, breakage, and other manner of unintended action that led to valuable, though unexpected, outcomes," admits Ivey Business School professor Robert D. Austin, PhD, in an article for Harvard Business School's website. Here are a few stories of "happy accidents" that have changed our lives in ways their discoverers could never have imagined.

The Mold that Saved Millions

Take Alexander Fleming's messy lab in 1928. After returning from a two-week vacation, he found his Petri dishes exactly where he'd left them—not exactly best practice for a bacteriologist. But among the cluttered dishes, something caught his eye: A mold had contaminated one of his bacterial cultures. Instead of tossing it out, Fleming took a closer look. The area around the mold was completely clear of bacteria. This

Sir Alexander Fleming is shown here in his laboratory in St. Mary's Hospital, London.

PENICILLIN

simple observation led to penicillin, the world's first antibiotic. "I did not invent penicillin," Fleming later admitted. "Nature did that. I only discovered it by accident." That happy accident would go on to save hundreds of millions of lives.

Rubber For the Roads

Then there's Charles Goodyear, who spent years trying to make existing rubber more useful. In 1839, after countless failed attempts to create a new rubber that wouldn't melt in summer or crack in winter, he accidentally dropped a mixture of rubber and sulfur onto his hot stove. Rather than turning into the usual sticky mess, the rubber charred and hardened into something entirely new: a weather-resistant material that would revolutionize transportation. Goodyear had stumbled upon vulcanization, the process that makes modern tires possible.

A Frozen Mistake Sticks

In 1905, young Frank Epperson—just 11 years old at the time—was mixing up a glass of soda water on his San Francisco porch. Like many children, he got distracted and left his drink outside overnight, stirring stick and all. The next morning, he found his forgotten drink had frozen solid around the stick. Most kids would have just tossed it out or let it melt so they could drink it again, but Frank saw potential in his frozen creation. He started calling it the Epsicle, though his own children would later convince him to change the name to Popsicle.

Interestingly, the world's largest tire manufacturer is LEGO (measured by total number of units).

Hooked On a Surprise Idea

Swiss engineer George de Mestral never intended to revolutionize fasteners. In 1948, he took his dog for a walk in the Alps and came home annoyed by the burdock burrs clinging to his clothes and his dog's fur. But instead of just brushing them off, he wondered what made them stick so well. Under a microscope, he discovered the burrs' clever system of hooks that caught on fabric and fur. That observation

MOST KIDS WOULD HAVE TOSSED IT OUT OR LET IT MELT, BUT FRANK SAW POTENTIAL IN HIS FROZEN CREATION.

inspired Velcro—a name he created from the French words “velours” (velvet) and “crochet” (hook). Today, everything from shoes to spacesuits uses this happened-upon innovation.

Sweet Serendipity Comes Calling

The medical field is particularly rich in these kinds of discoveries. In 1879, Constantin Fahlberg was working with coal tar derivatives when he went home for dinner; once there, he noticed his food tasted unusually sweet. Despite washing his hands before eating, this lingering sweet taste was due to a compound that had accidentally spilled on his hands earlier that day. That messy mistake led to the discovery of saccharin, which would later become Sweet’N Low.

Medicines That Switched Gears

Some modern medicines have surprising origins. Take Minoxidil (the active ingredient in Rogaine), for example, which was originally developed to treat hypertension (high blood pressure). It was discovered that this medication had a side effect of promoting hair growth, which led to its use as a topical treatment for hair loss. And then there’s Viagra: Originally developed to treat angina and high blood pressure in the 1980s, researchers were ready to shelve the drug after disappointing trial results. That is, until many test subjects reported an…unexpected side effect. That “side effect” would go on to completely revolutionize the treatment of erectile dysfunction and generate billions of dollars in sales.

A Man of Steel

In 1913, metallurgist Harry Brearley was working in Sheffield, England, trying to solve a tricky problem for a local gun manufacturer. They wanted to reduce erosion in rifle barrels, but what Brearley found instead was something far more significant. While examining some discarded test samples that had been left in the corner of his lab, he noticed something peculiar: These samples hadn't rusted like ordinary steel would have. Brearley had inadvertently created a steel alloy with 12.8% chromium, which suddenly made it resistant to corrosion. Brearley's "rustless steel" would go on to revolutionize everything from construction to kitchen cutlery.

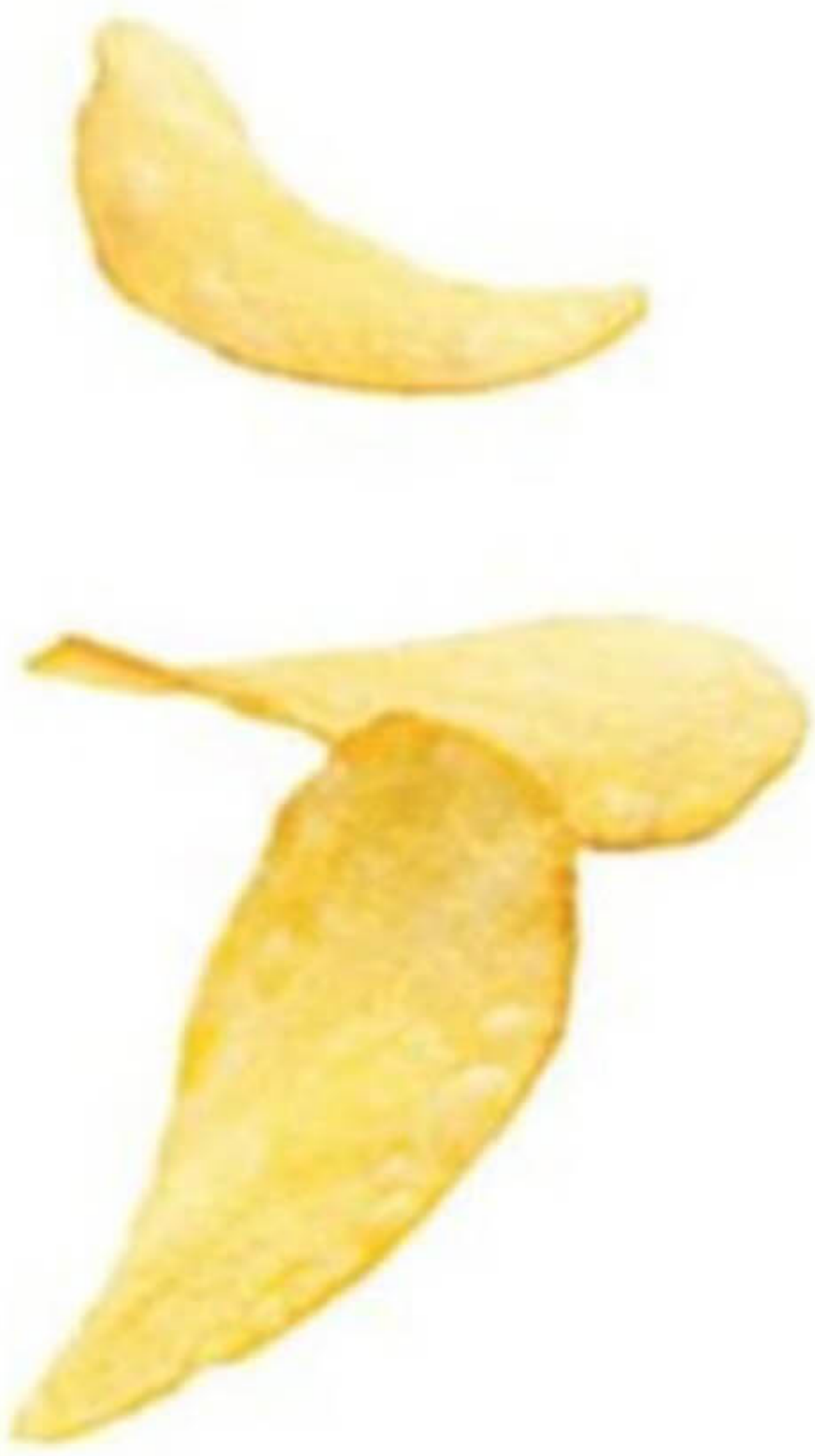
A Cool Treat Beats the Heat

Even the ice cream cone was born from a moment of crisis turned to opportunity. Picture this: It's the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, it's hot, and ice cream vendor Arnold Fornachou has just run out of paper cups. Disaster, right? Not quite. His neighbor at the fair, Ernest Hamwi, was selling a crispy waffle-like Syrian pastry called zalabia. In a moment of improvisation, Hamwi rolled one of his warm pastries into a cone shape, creating the perfect edible container for Fornachou's ice cream. While others also claimed to invent the ice cream cone, there's no doubt that this collaboration at the World's Fair helped popularize what would become an enduring symbol of summer pleasure.

> **THE ICE CREAM CONE WAS BORN FROM A MOMENT OF CRISIS TURNED OPPORTUNITY.**

A Legendary Cooking Lesson

Sometimes culinary innovations come from the most unexpected places. Take potato chips, for instance. In the summer of 1853, George Crum worked at Moon's Lake House in Saratoga Springs, New York, as a chef. According to local legend, a particularly picky customer kept sending back his French fries, complaining they were too thick and soft. Frustrated, Crum decided to teach the customer a lesson by slicing the potatoes paper-thin and frying them to a crisp. To his surprise, the customer loved the crunchy, salty creation. Decades later, Laura Scudder—a remarkable entrepreneur who began as a nurse and went on to become the first female attorney in Ukiah, California—would revolutionize the potato chip industry with this idea. In 1926, she began packaging chips in wax paper bags, keeping them fresh and crisp, and transforming a simple snack into a packaged food empire that would eventually span multiple states and be sold for $100 million to Borden in 1987.



Frito Lay was the leading potato chip vendor in the US in 2024, with over $4.2 billion in sales.

X Marks the Spot

The world of scientific discovery is equally full of unexpected moments. In 1895, German physicist Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen was experimenting with cathode ray tubes in his laboratory, trying to understand whether these mysterious rays could pass through glass. While working late one evening, he noticed something extraordinary: a glow coming from a chemically coated screen nearby. Röntgen had accidentally discovered X-rays, a form of radiation that could pass through solid objects. In one of the first demonstrations of this groundbreaking technology, he took an X-ray image of his wife's hand, revealing her skeletal structure. This accidental yet remarkable discovery would revolutionize medicine, allowing doctors to see inside the human body without conducting invasive procedures.

These stories remind us that innovation isn't always about following a plan. Sometimes, the best discoveries happen when we stay curious about the unexpected. As Louis Pasteur put it, "Chance favors the prepared mind." Ivey Business School professor Robert D. Austin, PhD, elaborated further: "Knowing too clearly where you are going, focusing too hard on a predefined objective, can cause you to miss value that might lie in a different direction." These inventors didn't just get lucky: They paid close attention when something unusual happened, and they weren't afraid to explore new avenue that their curiosity led them down. Their stories show us that sometimes the best ideas don't come from asking, "What if?" but instead from asking, "Why did that happen?" ☺

START YOUR OWN MAGIC

• **WANT TO** shake things up in your life? Start tiny. Research from Stanford's Behavior Design Lab shows that small actions, when repeated consistently, create lasting change better than grand gestures. Think of it like this: Reading one page of a book each morning is more likely to stick than promising yourself you'll read for two hours every day. These micro-changes work because they slip past your brain's resistance to big shifts while still moving you toward your goals. The science behind this is fascinating: Our brains are wired to conserve energy and resist change, but small adjustments don't trigger the same dreaded fear response as major overhauls.

The same principle scales up beautifully to family dynamics. Family therapists have long observed that positive changes often start with one person adjusting their own behavior, creating a ripple effect through the household. Instead of trying to overhaul everything at once, pick one small tradition to introduce—maybe a five-minute catch-up over breakfast or a quick evening walk around the block. Studies show that these small but consistent family rituals strengthen bonds and improve communication patterns over time. These mini-habits tend to evolve naturally; that breakfast check-in might grow into deeper conversations, or that evening walk might become a cherished time for sharing.

When it comes to community impact, social scientists have documented something fascinating called the multiplier effect. One person's small positive action often inspires others to follow suit, creating exponential change. The key is choosing something specific and achievable: Organize one community cleanup, start a mini free library, or help one elderly neighbor with their groceries. Research shows that witnessing others' good deeds triggers what's called "moral elevation"—that warm, uplifting feeling that makes us want to be better people.

THE GENEROUS EDUCATOR

THIS SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER LIVED A FRUGAL LIFE—BUT LEFT A PRICELESS LEGACY

When Genevieve Via Cava passed away in 2011 at age 89, her colleagues at Dumont Public Schools in New Jersey had no idea that she was sitting on a fortune. The special education teacher, who spent 45 years helping students with learning disabilities, lived a remarkably modest life, spending her afternoons clipping coupons and maintaining frugal habits she'd learned during the Great Depression. But beneath her simple lifestyle, she was quietly building a multimillion-dollar nest egg with a specific purpose in mind.

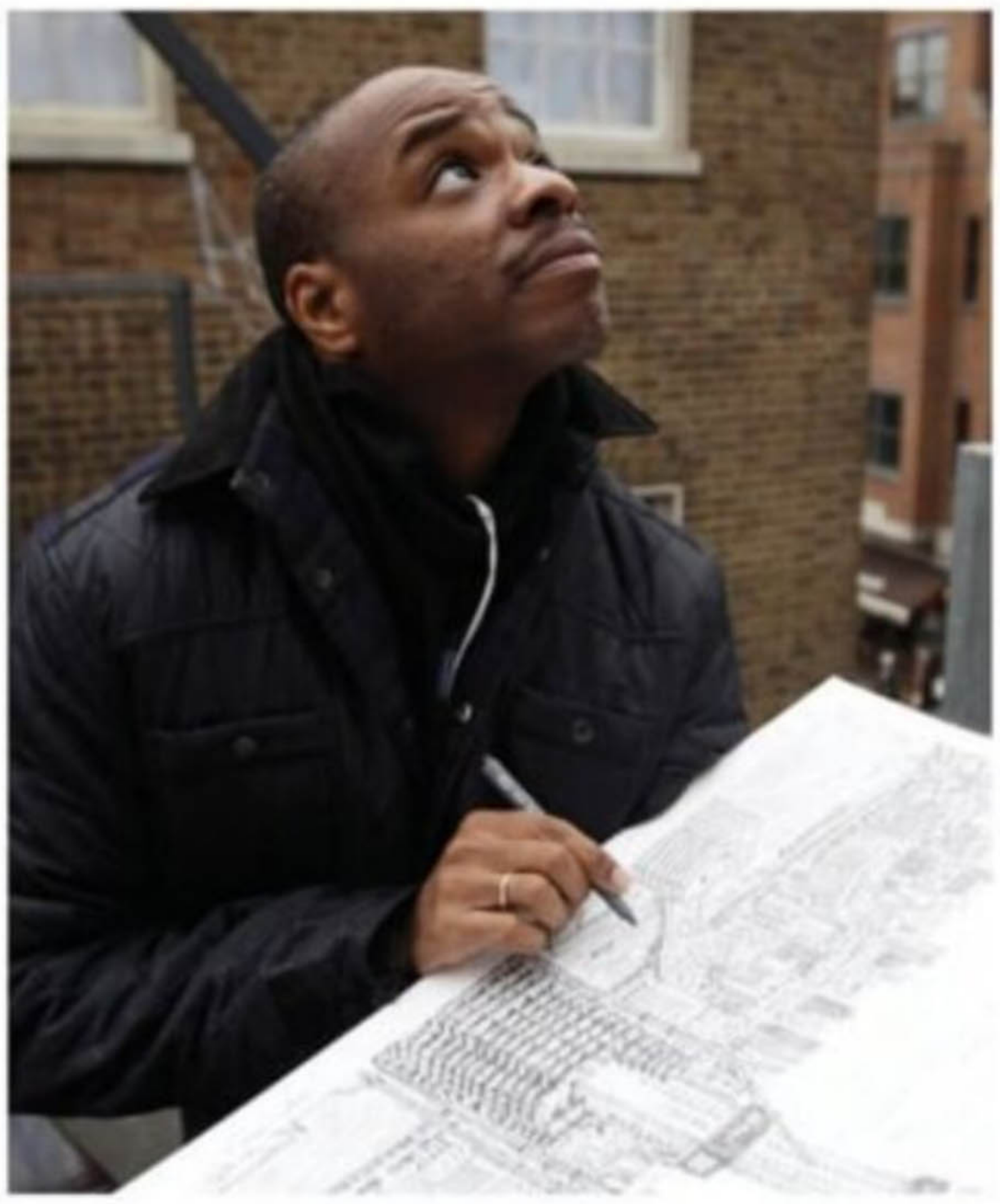
Seven years after her death, in April 2018, her former school district received an extraordinary surprise: a $1 million check from her estate. "We never could have imagined that she'd amassed that kind of money," Dumont School District Superintendent Emanuele Triggiano told *People Magazine*. "She'd told me once that she planned to leave something to help students, but $1 million? It's incredible." The money wasn't just a one-time gift: Via Cava had carefully planned for the interest from her donation to fund annual $25,000 scholarships for special education students pursuing post-secondary education. She also left $100,000 each to five organizations, including the Salvation Army and several animal shelters, ensuring her lifetime of diligent saving would benefit multiple causes. "She was an amazing woman who could light up a room just by walking in," Richard Jablonski, a friend of Via Cava's and the executor of her will, said in an interview with NorthJersey.com. "She had a smile that was unbelievable. She could talk to anybody just to start conversation with them, and by the time they walked away, they would be hugging."

THE MEMORY ARTIST

AFTER VIEWING SKYLINES FOR MERE MINUTES, AN ARTIST WITH AUTISM CAN SKETCH ENTIRE CITIES

Fun Facts

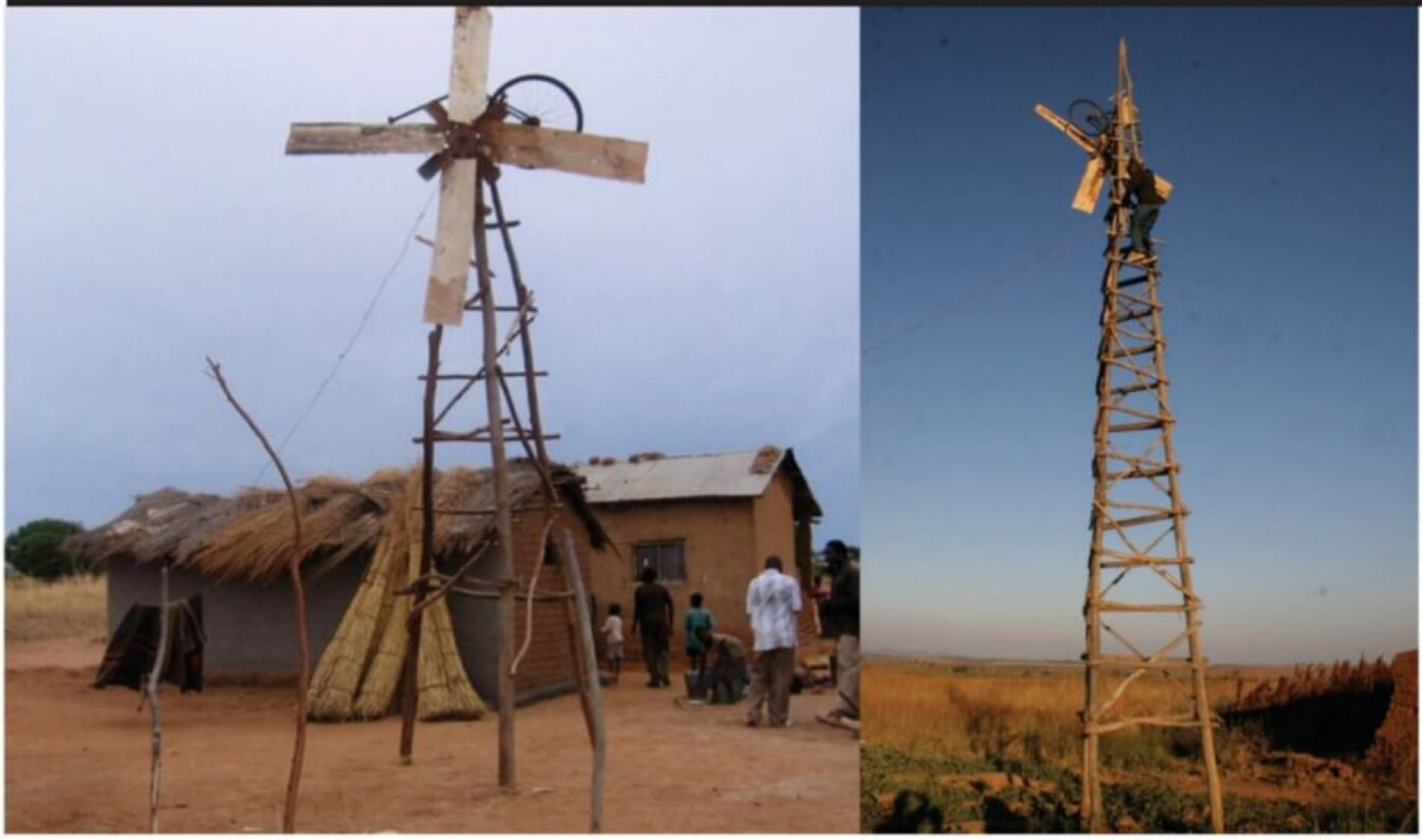
WILTSHIRE'S ORIGINAL ARTWORKS SELL FOR UPWARDS OF $10,000



Many of Wiltshire's pieces reflect London, but he also has drawn scenes from New York, Montreal, Dubai, Singapore, and many other places.

In the bustling art world of London, few stories are as remarkable as that of Stephen Wiltshire, a British architectural artist who can recreate entire cityscapes with near-photographic accuracy after just a single viewing. Born in 1974 to West Indian parents, Wiltshire was diagnosed with autism at age three and didn't fully speak until he was nine years old. Yet even before he could communicate verbally, he found his voice through art, selling his first work at the astounding age of seven. His extraordinary talent for capturing architectural details emerged early: As a young boy, he would draw remarkably precise sketches of London landmarks, each line placed with uncanny precision. "I always liked high-rise buildings, the many windows and lots of details," Wiltshire told his sister Annette in an interview for *The Guardian*. "I particularly like how it can change the skyline when new developments are added over the years."

Perhaps his most famous feat came after a mere 20-minute helicopter ride over Manhattan, from which he produced a stunning 19-foot panorama of New York City, capturing thousands of buildings with astonishing accuracy. His sister Annette described his artistic vision to *The New York Times*: "We'll all see the same thing, but we focus on what is of special interest. For Stephen, it's like a sponge where he absorbs everything but he doesn't squeeze out the rest." Wiltshire's remarkable abilities have earned him numerous accolades, including an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) for his contributions to the art world in 2006. Despite starting with a verbal IQ of 47 in his early years, he went on to earn his postgraduate degree in painting, drawing, and printmaking from the prestigious City & Guilds of London Art School in 1998. Today, his works hang in galleries worldwide, and his portfolio includes intricate renderings of Tokyo, Rome, and other major cities—each drawn entirely from memory after brief aerial observations, a testament to his extraordinary gift of recall and artistic precision.



Many villagers were skeptical of Kamkwamba's project, watching him gather what looked like worthless junk.

THE WIND HARNESSER

AMID A SEVERE FAMINE, A TEENAGER BUILDS A POWER-GENERATING WINDMILL FROM JUNK

Imagine being 14 years old and watching your family go hungry during a horrible drought—that's where William Kamkwamba of Malawi found himself in 2001. After being forced to drop out of school because his family couldn't afford the fees, he started spending his days at the local library. There, he stumbled across a worn-out science book with pictures of windmills. Even though his English wasn't great, something clicked as he studied those diagrams. In a country where 98% of people lived without electricity, William decided he was going to build a power-generating machine of his own.

William didn't exactly have a Home Depot nearby. Instead, he turned his village into a scavenger hunt, collecting whatever he could find: old bicycle parts, random pieces of metal, bits of broken tractors, and even flip-flops for the rubber. "Many people, including my mother, said I was crazy," he said in a TED Talk. But slowly, these discarded materials transformed into a 16-foot windmill. The moment those blades started turning and a tiny light bulb came to life in his family's home, everything changed. Before long, people were showing up at his door, hoping to charge their cell phones with his homemade power station.

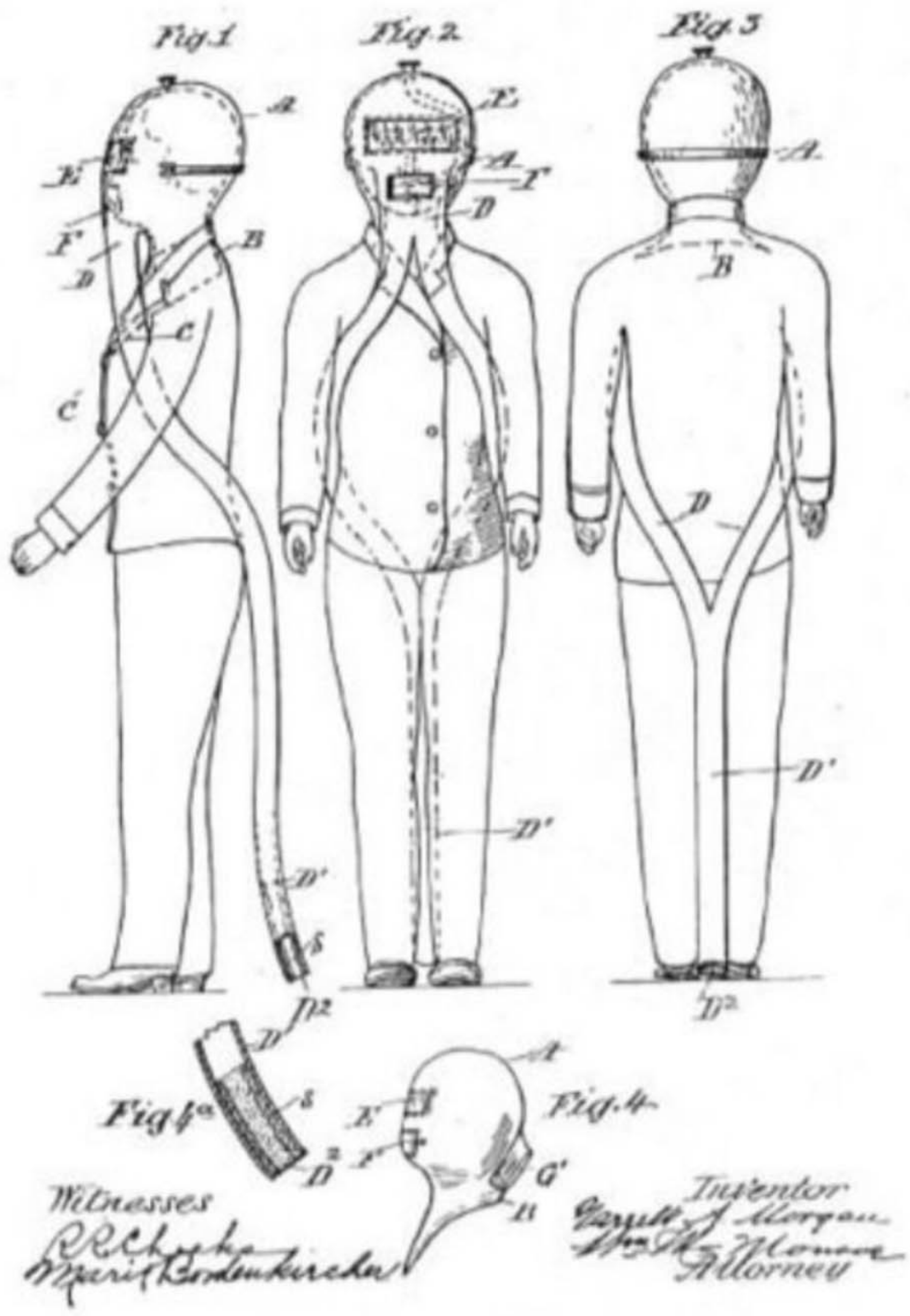
William went on to build two more windmills, with one reaching a whopping 39 feet high. Not content with just providing electricity, he also built a solar-powered water pump, giving his com-

munity their first reliable source of clean drinking water. Word of the teenage inventor spread beyond his village, eventually landing him opportunities to finish his education and share his story through a TED Talk. His journey from a curious boy with a library card to a renowned innovator showed how determination and resourcefulness could light up an entire community. He ended his TED Talk with these words: "I would like to say something to all the people out there like me, to the Africans, and the poor who are struggling with your dreams: God bless…I say to you, trust yourself and believe. Whatever happens, don't give up."

William's story reached an even wider audience through his memoir *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, co-written with Bryan Mealer. In 2019, it was adapted into a feature film of the same name, directed by and starring Chiwetel Ejiofor. The film brings his journey to life, showing how a boy's perseverance brought light to his village and hope to his community during their darkest hour.

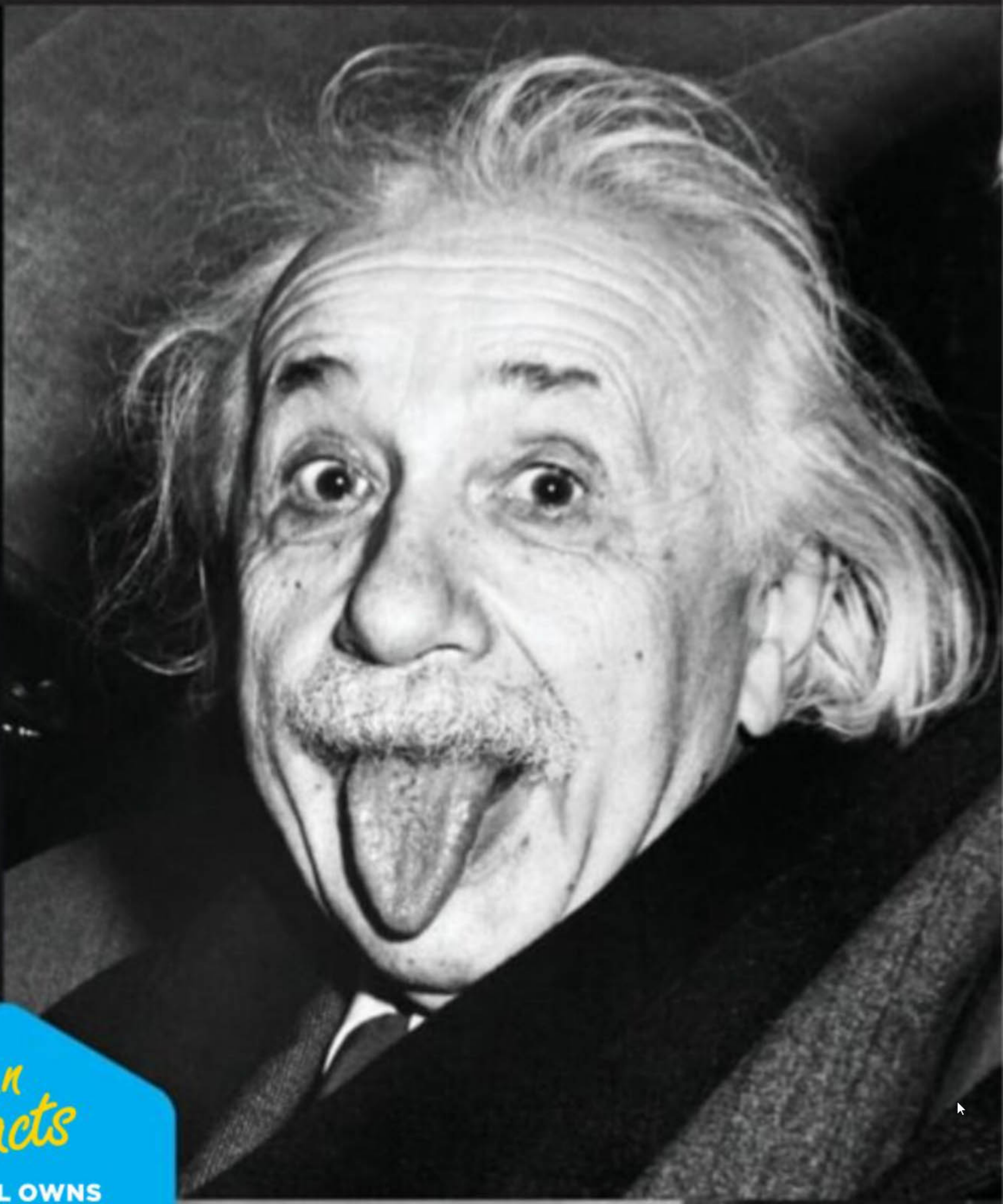
FROM A CURIOUS LITTLE BOY WITH A LIBRARY CARD TO RENOWNED INNOVATOR

THE DOUBLE LIFESAVER



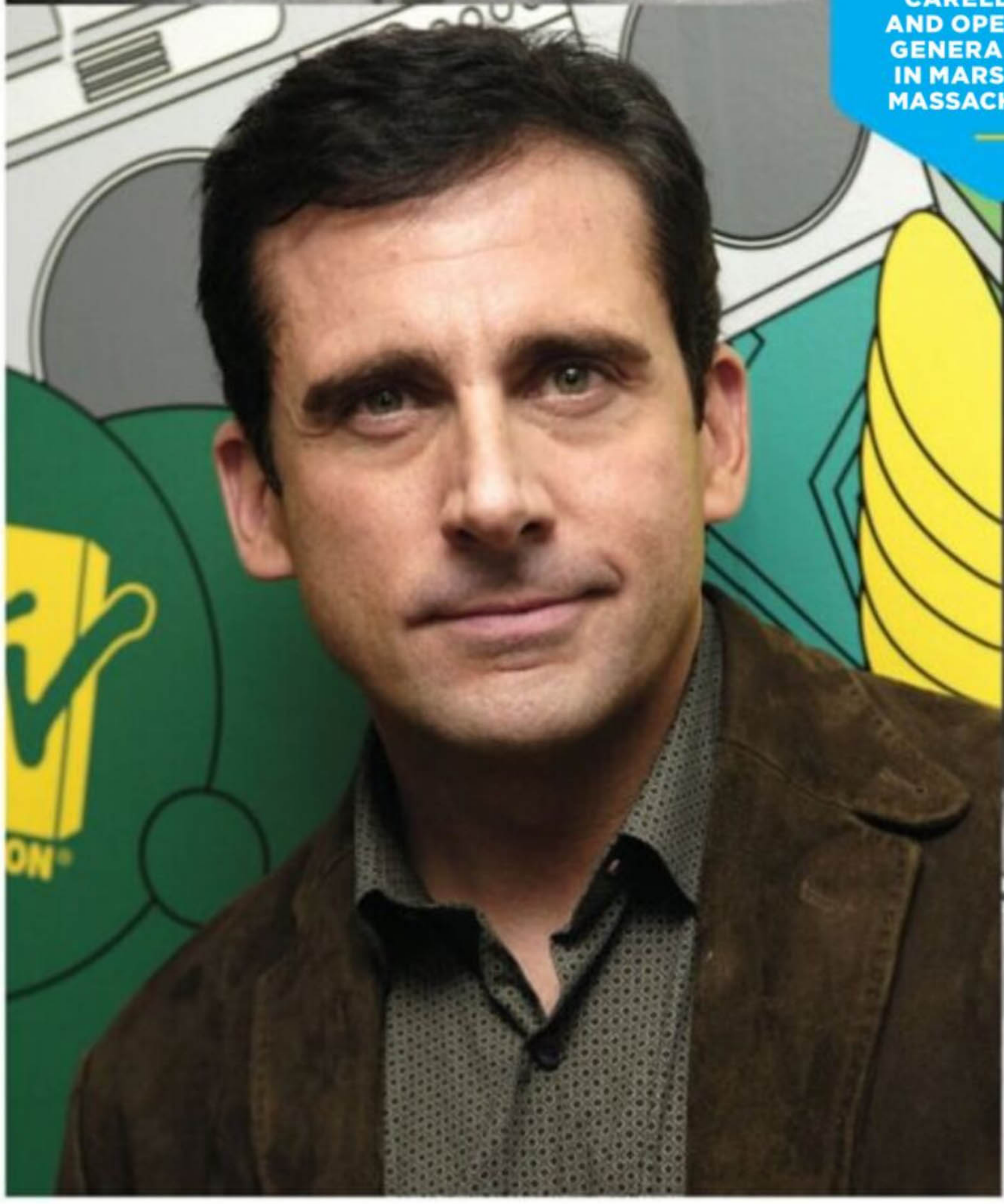
• **WHEN GARRETT** Morgan—a Cleveland resident who began his career as a sewing-machine mechanic—observed firefighters struggling against suffocating smoke, he developed his "Breathing Device" in 1914, a safety hood that would become the prototype for gas masks used during World War I. The invention proved its worth in 1916 when Morgan himself used it to rescue workers trapped in a gas-filled tunnel beneath Lake Erie, showcasing just how life-saving this device could be. The safety hood earned Morgan the first grand prize at the Second International Exposition of Safety and Sanitation. But he wasn't done inventing just yet.

In 1923, Morgan turned his attention to a different kind of safety hazard. The first Black citizen in Cleveland to own a car, he was compelled to improve traffic signals after witnessing a severe collision at an intersection. His solution was a T-shaped traffic signal with three positions: stop, go, and an all-directional stop that helped manage traffic flow more effectively than ever before. This three-position traffic signal became the foundation for the modern traffic light system we use today, and Morgan didn't hesitate to share his innovation: He patented his design in the U.S., Britain, and Canada, making safer streets a global reality.



Fun Facts

CARELL OWNS AND OPERATES A GENERAL STORE IN MARSHFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

THESE HOUSEHOLD NAMES DIDN'T FIND SUCCESS UNTIL LATER IN LIFE—ON THEIR OWN TERMS

Many people think success has an expiration date, but some of the world's most influential figures didn't hit their stride until well into adulthood. Take Vera Wang, the renowned fashion designer whose wedding gowns have graced countless celebrity ceremonies. Before creating her fashion empire, Wang was a competitive figure skater who failed to make the Olympic team, then spent nearly two decades as a *Vogue* editor. It wasn't until age 40 that she launched her first bridal boutique, sparked by her own frustrating search for a wedding dress. Today, her brand is worth hundreds of millions of dollars—proof that second acts can outshine first ones.

Martha Stewart's path to becoming a lifestyle mogul was anything but traditional. She launched a catering business in her thirties, but her true breakthrough didn't come until age 41 when she published her first cookbook. This late-career pivot led to the creation of *Martha Stewart Living* magazine in 1990, and eventually, a media empire worth billions. In a LinkedIn post, Stewart told the story of visiting her doctor in 1982, after she published that first cookbook: "My doctor, in the sit-down session after the physical exam, exclaimed: 'You are a late bloomer.' I took his remarks as a compliment and have never forgotten that it is, indeed, never too late to start a project, never too late to realize a dream. In 1982, I was actually just getting started."

Steve Carell's path to stardom was a slow burn that caught fire in his 40s. After spending his 20s performing with Chicago's Second City comedy troupe and appearing in small commercial roles (including a memorable Brown's Chicken advertisement), Carell worked steadily but somewhat under the radar through his 30s. His breakthrough finally came at age 43 with *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, which he co-wrote and starred in. The film's success, combined with his role as Michael Scott in *The Office*, transformed him from a little-known comedy actor into one of Hollywood's most versatile performers.

Julia Child's culinary journey is equally inspiring. Despite growing up with a family chef and having zero cooking experience, Child discovered her passion for French cuisine at age 37 when her husband Paul was stationed in Paris. She enrolled at the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu cooking school and spent nine years meticulously crafting her first cookbook. Child was 49 when *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* was published, and 50 when she debuted on television, revolutionizing American home cooking and becoming one of the first celebrity chefs.

Even Albert Einstein, whose name is now synonymous with genius, experienced his most groundbreaking achievements relatively late by scientific standards. While working as a patent clerk at age 26—a job he took after failing to secure an academic position—Einstein published his revolutionary papers on special relativity and the photoelectric effect. This latter discovery wouldn't earn him the Nobel Prize until 1921, when he was 42. Einstein continued making significant contributions to physics well into his later years, demonstrating that intellectual breakthroughs aren't limited by age. "The important thing is not to stop questioning," Einstein told *Life* magazine editor William Miller in an interview. "Curiosity has its own reason for existence. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day."

THESE STORIES ARE PROOF THAT SECOND ACTS CAN OUTSHINE FIRST ONES.

Martha Stewart started her career as a model before working as a Wall Street stockbroker.

THE JOY LAB

YOUR SCIENCE-BACKED GUIDE TO FINDING HAPPINESS

Think of happiness like a garden—it needs the right conditions to flourish. But here's the fascinating part: About 40% of our happiness is within our control, according to a science-based theory among researchers from the University of Missouri, the University of California, San Diego, and the University of California, Riverside. That means we have more power over our well-being than we might think. You can start small: Try the "three good things" exercise—each night before bed, write down three positive moments from your day, no matter how tiny. Studies show this simple practice can increase happiness levels within just one week.

Move Your Body

Let's begin with your body, because it turns out your physical and mental well-being are best friends. When you exercise, your brain releases a cocktail of feel-good chemicals that boost your mood. But you don't need to run marathons to reap the benefits. A recent study published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology* found that just 11 minutes of moderate exercise daily can significantly impact your happiness levels. Try a 10-minute dance party in your kitchen, take a quick walk during your lunch break, or do some jumping jacks while watching TV. Even better news? Activities like walking your dog count double—research indicates that people with pets are more likely to exercise often, be outside more, and feel happier in general. "Pets have become so strongly associated with positive mental health because through their faithfulness, lack of judgment and very nature, they meet the definition of a great friend," explains animal expert Bill Henry, Ph.D., professor in the psychological sciences department at Metropolitan State University of Denver, in an interview. "And in doing so, they answer a fundamental psychological need in all of us."

Find a physical activity you truly enjoy—maybe that's riding a stationary bike, practicing Tai Chi in the park, or lifting weights in your living room.

Fun Facts

DOLPHINS ACTUALLY GIVE EACH OTHER NAMES THROUGH UNIQUE WHISTLES

Value Social Time

Speaking of connections, your social circle isn't just nice to have—it's essential for happiness. Scientists have discovered that strong social bonds act as a kind of happiness multiplier, with each positive relationship reinforcing the others. Try setting a "connection timer" for five minutes each day—use it to send a voice message to an old friend, write a thoughtful comment on a family member's social media post, or schedule a coffee date. Even your pet can help here: "Research suggests that pets have a profound effect on social lubrication, helping create relationships with other pet owners and animal lovers," noted Jacqueline Boyd, senior lecturer in animal science at Nottingham Trent University, in an article for *The Conversation*. Visit a dog park, join a pet owners' meetup group, or simply chat with other animal lovers during your daily walks.

Treat Your Mind Well

Now let's talk about your mind. Remember those meditation and mindfulness practices you've heard about? They're not just trendy—they're scientifically solid. Research published in the *Journal of Positive Psychology* found that regular meditation practice makes you feel better inside—and actually makes you look happier to others. Start with the "5-5-5" technique: breathe in for five seconds, hold for five seconds, breathe out for five seconds. Do this for just one minute when you wake up. A study published in the journal *Personality and Individual Differences* found that mindfulness combined with self-compassion had an even stronger effect on happiness than mindfulness alone. To reap the benefits, try placing your hand on your heart during difficult moments and speaking to yourself as you would to a good friend.

Find Your "Why"

Purpose matters too, and perhaps more than you'd expect. A study by Europe's ESCP Business School found that having a sense of purpose is actually more important for sustained happiness than pursuing pleasure alone. Start a "micro-volunteering" practice: Spend 15 minutes helping someone on a skills-sharing platform, participate in online citizen science projects, or commit to one small act of community service each week, like picking up litter in your neighborhood or helping an older neighbor with their groceries. Choose one area where you'd like to make a difference and take one tiny step toward it today.

> **YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM RESPONDS POSITIVELY TO HAPPINESS, CREATING A BENEFICIAL CYCLE.**

Here's perhaps the most empowering finding of all: Happiness can be practiced and improved, just like any other skill. Your immune system actually responds positively to happiness—as discovered in research published in the journal *Psychosomatic Medicine*—creating a beneficial cycle where feeling good helps you stay healthy, which in turn helps you feel better. Create a "joy toolkit"—a list of quick happiness boosters that work for you. Maybe it's a playlist of songs that never fail to lift your mood, a folder of funny animal videos on your phone, or a collection of happy photos. When you need a boost, spend two minutes with something from your toolkit. The key is having these tools ready before you need them, making it easier to shift your mood when necessary.

Life with kids can be messy (to say the least). Trying your best to embrace the chaos that comes with raising little humans can be liberating.

TIME TO LAUGH

• **HERE ARE** numbers that'll make you smile: It takes only 12 muscles to turn that frown upside down. Recent scientific research has settled on approximately a dozen muscles working together to create a genuine smile, with the key players being the zygomaticus major (which pulls up your cheeks) and the orbicularis oculi (which crinkles your eyes). And those muscles get quite the workout—the average child flexes them 300 times daily with natural laughter, while adults typically clock in at 17 daily chuckles.

Want to boost your happiness in just 20 seconds? That's all the time it takes for a good hug to trigger your body's release of oxytocin, often nicknamed the love hormone. This feel-good chemical acts like nature's stress reliever, lowering your blood pressure and reducing anxiety. Even better, laughter works as a natural endorphin pump, flooding your body with mood-lifting hormones while giving your heart, lungs, and muscles a mini-workout. In fact, just 15 minutes of genuine laughter can burn between 10 and 40 calories. It's like hitting the gym for your joy muscles, except this workout comes with zero sweat and all the benefits.

SECTION 2

Creating POSITIVE Change

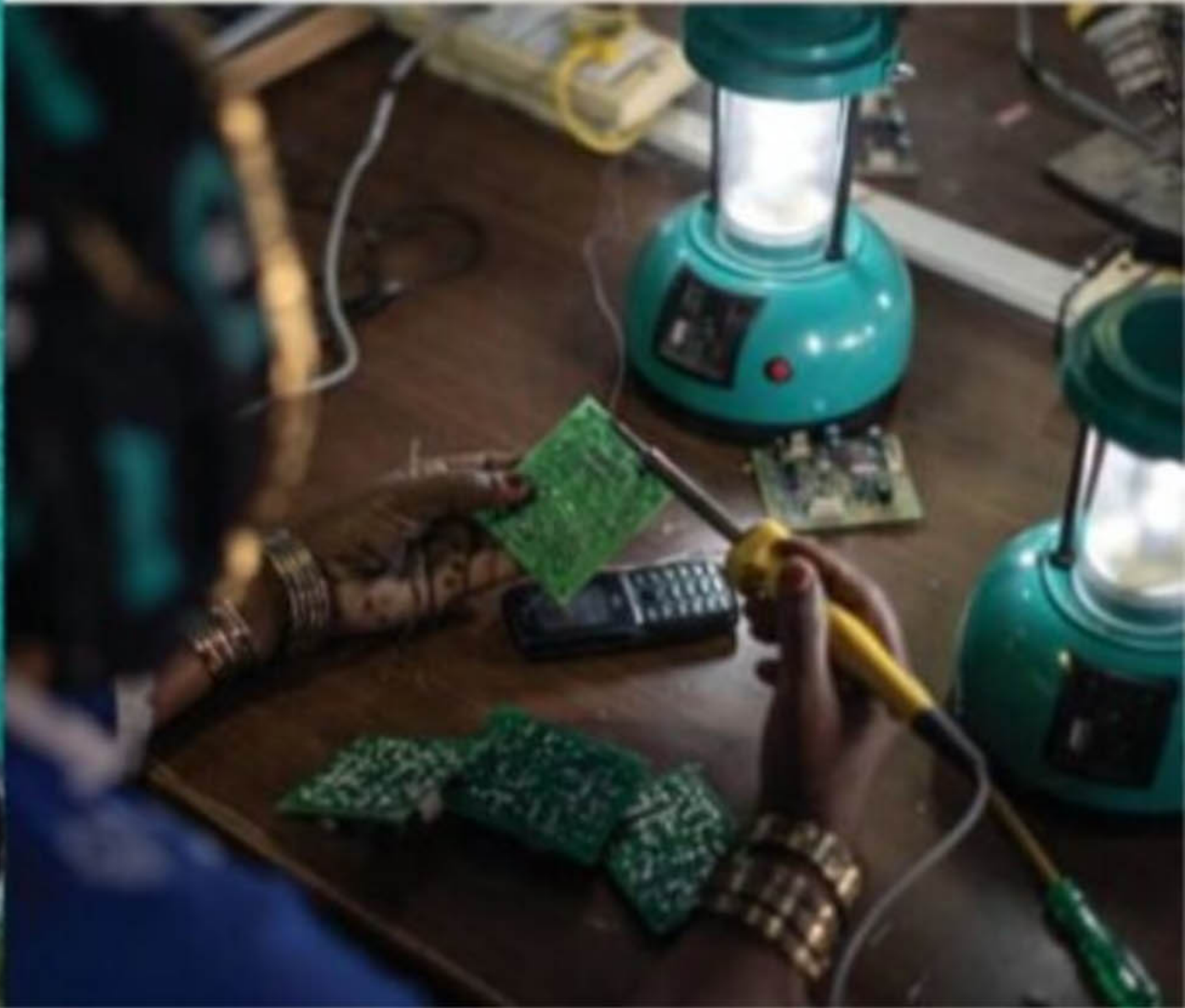
SIMPLE ACTS THAT MAKE MAJOR IMPACTS FOR PEOPLE EVERYWHERE

Everyone has that spark inside them—that quiet whisper saying they could make the world a little better. And across the globe, ordinary people are proving that transformation often starts with a single, simple choice. From lunch ladies turning cafeterias into stages for daily joy to former fishermen who now protect the very creatures they once hunted, these everyday heroes remind us that revolution doesn't always roar; sometimes it whispers through small acts of dedication.

In this section, you'll meet grandmothers lighting up remote villages, artists who see masterpieces in mountains of discarded plastic, young voices who refuse to let their age define their impact, and many more. Their stories are about what's possible when we dare to reimagine our role in the world. Whether it's saving bees one rooftop garden at a time or starting a ripple of kindness that touches thousands, these changemakers prove that the most powerful question we can ask ourselves isn't, "What can one person do?" but rather, "What will I do first?"

BORDALO II

Milk



TURNING TRASH INTO ART

ARTISTS AROUND THE GLOBE TRANSFORM TRASH INTO TREASURE—AND SEND A MESSAGE

In Detroit's vibrant art scene, a remarkable transformation is taking place as artists turn urban waste into powerful statements about sustainability and creativity. Halima Cassells, a 2023 Kresge Artist Fellowship winner, leads workshops where community members collaborate to rescue materials from the Rouge River, turning environmental cleanup into collective artistic expression. "So many of these things were used once, and then now, what do we do with it?" Cassells said in an interview with BridgeDetroit. Working alongside her, Hannah Tizedes has made waves as a Great Lakes artist and sustainability educator, crafting stunning pieces from beach-found plastic bits and discarded bottles to spotlight our single-use society. "It brings light to all this stuff that we don't realize is washing up on the beaches, like hair clips," explained Tizedes in an article published on Planet Detroit. "All of this stuff is just random."

The movement extends beyond Michigan, with artists like Suprina Troche in Poughkeepsie, New York, making her mark by transforming everyday waste into thought-provoking sculptures. Her innovative approach includes creating large-scale, immersive forest installations made entirely from trash, bringing attention to environmental issues through public art. Perhaps most notably in this field, Brazilian-American artist Vik Muniz created

The artist Bordalo II creates enormous sculptures from scrap metal that force viewers to confront their relationship with waste.

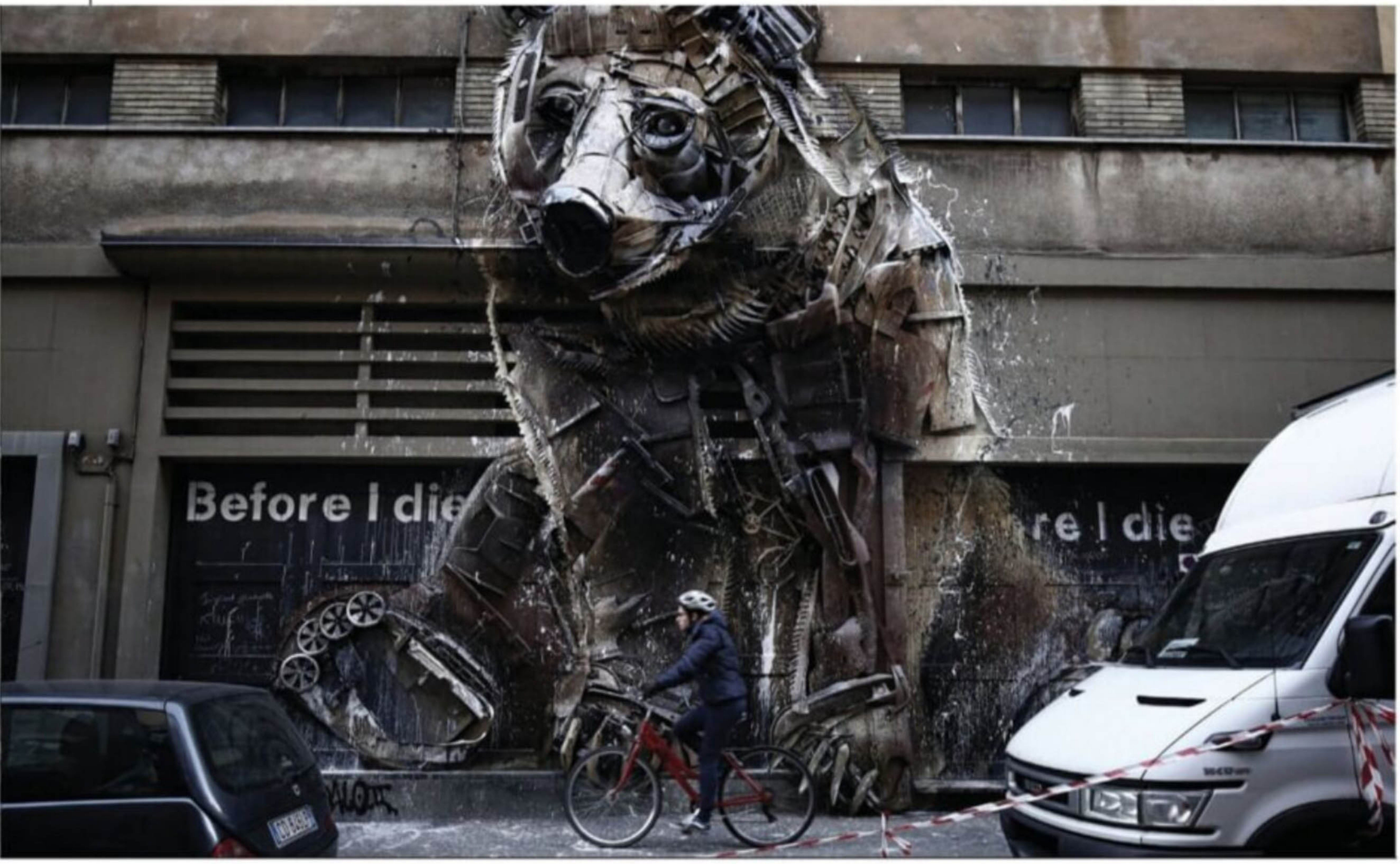
a groundbreaking series at Jardim Gramacho, which was previously the world's largest landfill; he photographed waste pickers and recreated their portraits using the materials they sorted through daily. The proceeds from these powerful works went directly to improving the lives of the workers, demonstrating how art can drive social change.

This fusion of environmental consciousness and artistic expression has given rise to a global movement known as "recycled art" or "upcycling art," inspiring creators worldwide to tackle excessive consumption and environmental pollution through their work. Artists like Bordalo II have taken this concept to new heights. "Damaged bumpers, burnt garbage cans, tires, and appliances are just some of the objects that can be identified when you go into detail," the Portuguese artist Bordalo II said in an interview with ISupportStreetArt.com about his work. "They are camouflaging the result of our habits with little ecological and social awareness." These artists are sparking crucial conversations about sustainability and encouraging communities to see the potential in what others might dismiss as trash.

Fun Facts

AN ESTIMATED 75% OF WASTE IS RECYCLABLE (SADLY, WE ACTUALLY RECYCLE ABOUT 30%)

PROCEEDS FROM MUNIZ'S POWERFUL WORKS WENT DIRECTLY TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF WASTE PICKERS.



BRINGING SMILES TO LUNCHTIME

SCHOOL CAFETERIA WORKERS ARE GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND THEIR DAILY JOBS TO BRIGHTEN KIDS' DAYS

In schools across America, cafeteria workers are dishing out daily doses of joy. At Kingston Elementary School in Virginia Beach, Virginia, cafeteria manager Stacey Truman transformed ordinary bananas into vessels of inspiration when she started writing encouraging messages on the fruit. What began as a simple habit of writing notes in her own children's lunchboxes blossomed into a school-wide phenomenon, with students eagerly anticipating messages like "Never give up" and "You are wise!" scrawled across their fruit each morning. The practice has not only boosted morale but has also encouraged the kids to eat more fruit.

Over at Lake Shore High School, in Buffalo, New York, Linda Kibler has taken cafeteria creativity to new heights. For more than a decade, this dedicated cafeteria worker has transformed the lunch space into an ever-changing wonderland of seasonal decorations. Her life-sized displays, crafted largely from recycled materials that pass through the school, have become so beloved that students have taken to social media to showcase her artistic talents. "I love doing it. It just warms my heart to create things, and it brings a lot of joy to people, and it's so bland without decorations," Kibler told WGRZ-TV. "As long as I've got boxes that I can get out of the dumpster, I'm good." Kibler, at 67, starts planning out how her elaborate scenes will look several months in advance, proving that imagination knows no age limit.

The spirit of innovation in school cafeterias continues to spread. At Laurel Hill School in

CHALLENGE: BE A JOY SPREADER

• **HERE'S YOUR** mission: Create a moment of pure, unexpected joy for a complete stranger this week. Science actually backs up this challenge; performing random acts of kindness triggers the release of oxytocin in both the giver and receiver. Plus, that warm, fuzzy feeling you get from making someone smile? It can last for hours, and sometimes even days.

Try leaving a $5 coffee gift card on a park bench with a cheerful note, or tape quarters to a laundromat vending machine. Pay the toll for the car behind you, or write positive sticky notes and secretly plant them on the mirrors in public restrooms. Hold the elevator door for someone rushing toward it and greet them with a genuine smile, or spend five minutes picking up litter in a public space that's often messy. The key is to stay anonymous—there's something magical about creating joy without expecting recognition. When you make someone's day without them knowing who to thank, you create a ripple effect. They pass that feeling forward, turning your single act into a chain reaction of kindness that touches people in ways you'll never know.

THEY'RE SPREADING JOY, ONE MEAL AT A TIME.

Laurel Hill, Florida, cafeteria manager Christy Hudson gained recognition for going above and beyond during Covid-19 school shutdowns by delivering meals and school devices to a student who didn't have transportation. In York, South Carolina, students line up after lunch to hand their tray to cafeteria worker Tarius McClain, who does a spirited dance each time a child hands him a tray, bringing bursts of joy to the lunch line. "If I see a kid having a bad day, I will try to brighten their day up," McClain told WSOC-TV. "I told myself that I'll put on a show for them and try to get them to laugh. So I started dancing… and the next day, they started dancing." These lunchtime heroes represent a growing movement of cafeteria workers who see their role as more than just serving food—they're spreading joy throughout communities, one meal at a time.

School breakfast and lunch have significant impacts on children's academic performance.

Fun Facts

BEES CAN SEE ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT, BUT NOT THE COLOR RED

PROTECTING OUR POLLINATORS

THE WORLD IS ABUZZ WITH THESE ORGANIZATIONS HELPING BEE POPULATIONS THRIVE

In the concrete jungle of New York City, an unexpected movement is taking flight—literally. Fourth-generation beekeeper Andrew Coté tends to millions of buzzing employees atop some of Manhattan's most iconic buildings. As founder of Bees Without Borders and the New York City Beekeepers Association, Coté has transformed the city's skyline into a haven for pollinators, proving that urban environments can become thriving ecosystems for these essential insects. Coté spoke about Bees Without Borders on the Hive Jive podcast: "Our mission is to help alleviate poverty through beekeeping endeavors, and to that end, we've worked in many, many places around the world: the Republic of Moldova, Fiji, Haiti, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, even places in the inner city—parts of the Bronx, parts of Brooklyn—and we are trying to bring beekeeping skills as a way for people to generate income."

The movement has spread far beyond individual beekeepers. The Javits Center, often known as New York City's largest convention space, now hosts a remarkable green roof of nearly seven acres. This elevated oasis isn't just for show—it's home to several bee colonies that produce enough honey to create specialty products for the center's food services. Similarly, the Fashion Institute of Technology has integrated beekeeping into its curriculum, with rooftop hives serving a dual purpose: pollinating the school's natural dye garden while also providing new sources of sustainable dyes through bee products. The Starrett-Lehigh Building in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood has taken this concept further by creating a rooftop urban farm where bees forage among perennial flowers, including echinacea and butterfly bush, creating a self-sustaining ecosystem above city streets.

What makes these urban apiaries particularly successful is their elevation. Rooftop hives (to a point; high-rises are not ideal) actually enjoy several advantages over their ground-level counterparts—they typically experience fewer problems with common hive pests like ants and beetles, which primarily live in soil. The height also encourages bees to forage more widely, as they'll travel up to three miles from their hives, effectively pollinating gardens and green spaces throughout the surrounding neighborhoods.

Leading these conservation efforts is The Bee Conservancy, an environmental non-profit organization that has established a network of bee sanctuaries across various urban locations. "Over the years, I learned that honeybees are actually only six of 40,000 bee species in the world, and a lot of those bee species actually are critical for the food we grow, especially here in the States," explained Guillermo Fernandez, founder of the Bee Conservancy, on the Brown Girl Green podcast. "Like bumblebees…you really need them for tomatoes. There's also a squash bee that you really need to grow cucumbers and other squash." Through its innovative programs, the conservancy reaches thousands of people annually, combining hands-on education with practical conservation work.

The rooftop pollinator movement extends well beyond New York's borders. In Utrecht, Netherlands, city planners have taken an innovative approach by transforming more than 300 bus stops into pollinator havens. These "green roofs" atop transit shelters create a network of crucial habitats for urban bees, demonstrating how even the smallest spaces can contribute to pollinator conservation. The project has turned otherwise unused space into vital stepping stones for bees traversing the city, while simultaneously helping to capture rainwater and reduce urban heat island effects.

The Bee Conservancy has bee sanctuaries in New York City at the Central Park Zoo, Governors Island, Hell's Kitchen Farm Project, and more.

CHILDREN STEPPING UP

STRONG-WILLED YOUNG PEOPLE WHO DEFIED THEIR AGE TO RISE TO THE OCCASION

Kids all over the world are proving that you don't need a driver's license to drive real change in your community and beyond. From tackling climate issues to fighting for social justice, these young activists aren't waiting around for someone else to fix things—they're rolling up their sleeves and getting it done themselves.

Jerome Foster II

Climate activism finds its true champions through unwavering commitment. Jerome Foster II made history as the youngest-ever White House advisor, joining the Environmental Justice Advisory Council after an extraordinary journey of climate activism. His weekly climate strikes at the White House gates lasted for 80 weeks, catching the attention of high-profile activists like Greta Thunberg (see page 43) and Jane Fonda. He helped organize large climate marches in Washington, D.C., and has spoken at both the United Nations Youth Climate Summit and the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights. While still in high school, he founded OneMillionofUs, a youth voting advocacy group, transforming individual passion into collective action.

GLOBAL CITIZEN FESTIVAL
CENTRAL PARK
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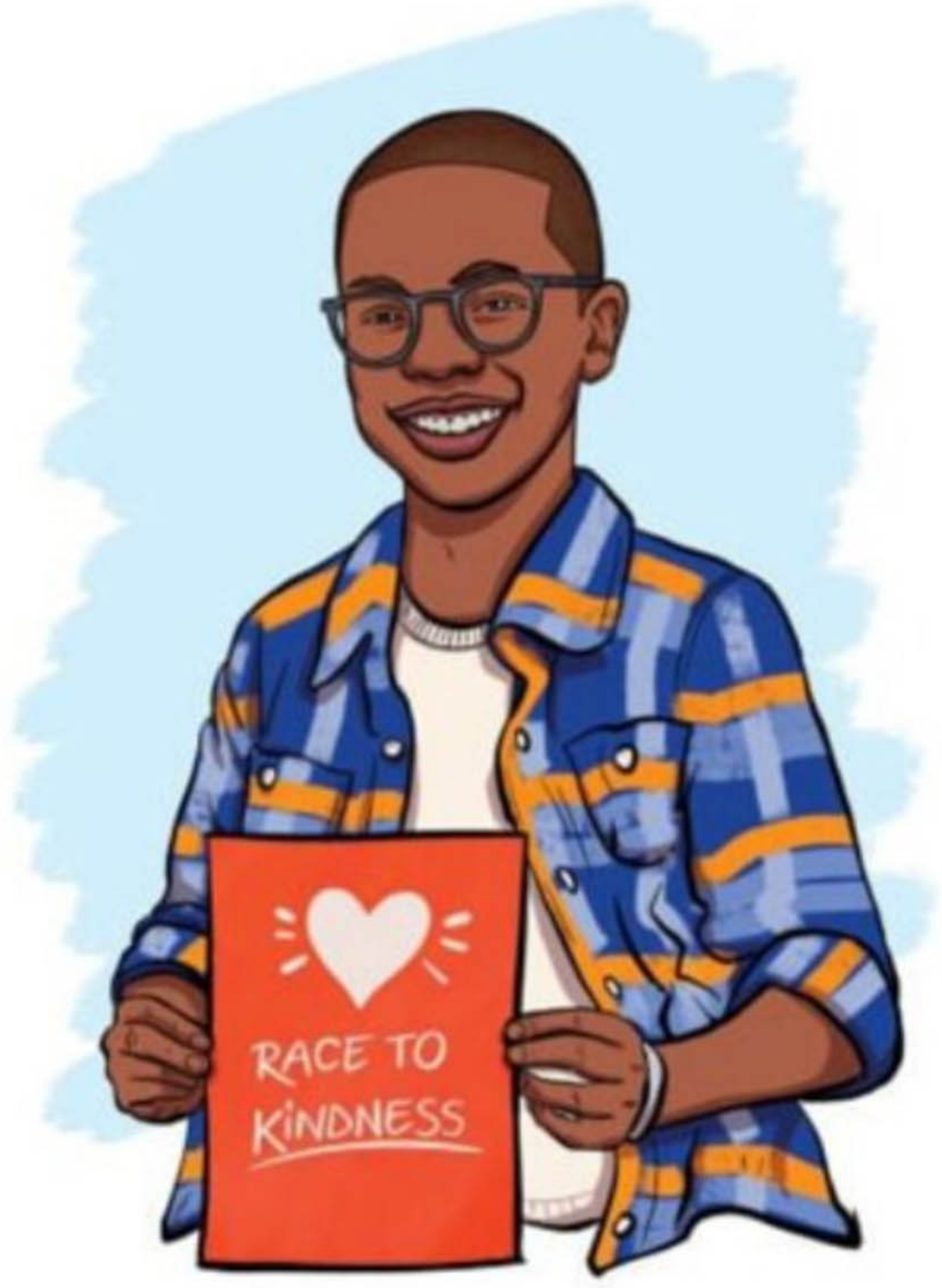

Orion Jean

When Orion Jean—named *TIME* Magazine's 2021 Kid of the Year—won the 2020 "Think Kindness National Speech Contest," he used his $500 prize to donate toys to a children's hospital in Texas. But Orion didn't stop there. His "Race to Kindness" initiative has achieved extraordinary results: over half a million books donated to children, and more than 100,000 meals provided to food-insecure families across the country. Expanding his reach in this way showed that one kid with a big heart can create ripples of change across an entire nation.

Jax Bari

Eleven-year-old Jax Bari isn't messing around when it comes to celiac disease awareness—he's filed a Citizen Petition with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to label gluten as a major food allergen. His advocacy is changing how we think about food safety and labeling, making positive change in the lives of kids and adults with food allergies. He's even spoken at the National Institutes of Health, spreading his message to a wide audience of scientists.

AMERICA
HAS A
WATER CRISIS

Mari Copeny's sneakers she wore while accepting the Changemaker Award during the 2022 Billboard Music Awards

billboard
MUSIC AWARDS
rd
RDS

Mari Copeny

Water justice has a fierce defender in Mari Copeny. Known as "Little Miss Flint," she has been advocating for clean water in her hometown of Flint, Michigan since she was just eight years old. After writing a letter to President Obama about the Flint water crisis, he visited the city, which led to $100 million in relief. Since then, she has raised over $700,000 to provide water filters, bottled water, and school supplies to her community.

Jahkil Jackson

Kindness comes with a toolkit, and Jahkil Jackson's is packed with compassion. At just eight years old, he founded Project I Am, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping the homeless by creating "Blessing Bags" filled with essential necessities like toothbrushes and socks. Recognized by President Obama and named a "Young Wonder" CNN Hero, Jahkil has touched the lives of over 100,000 men, women, and children across the world. His efforts have raised more than $550,000 for those experiencing homelessness, and he's also a two-time best-selling author and motivational speaker who encourages youth to serve their communities. Jahkil is living proof that empathy can change the world, one blessing bag at a time.

Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai's influence has only grown since becoming the youngest Nobel Peace Prize laureate. Her organization, the Malala Fund, won the 2024 Champion of the International Rule of Law Award for its efforts to increase girls' access to education. She continues to be honored for her efforts to combat gender apartheid, showing that her advocacy for girls' education remains as powerful and necessary as ever.

PROTEC
THE
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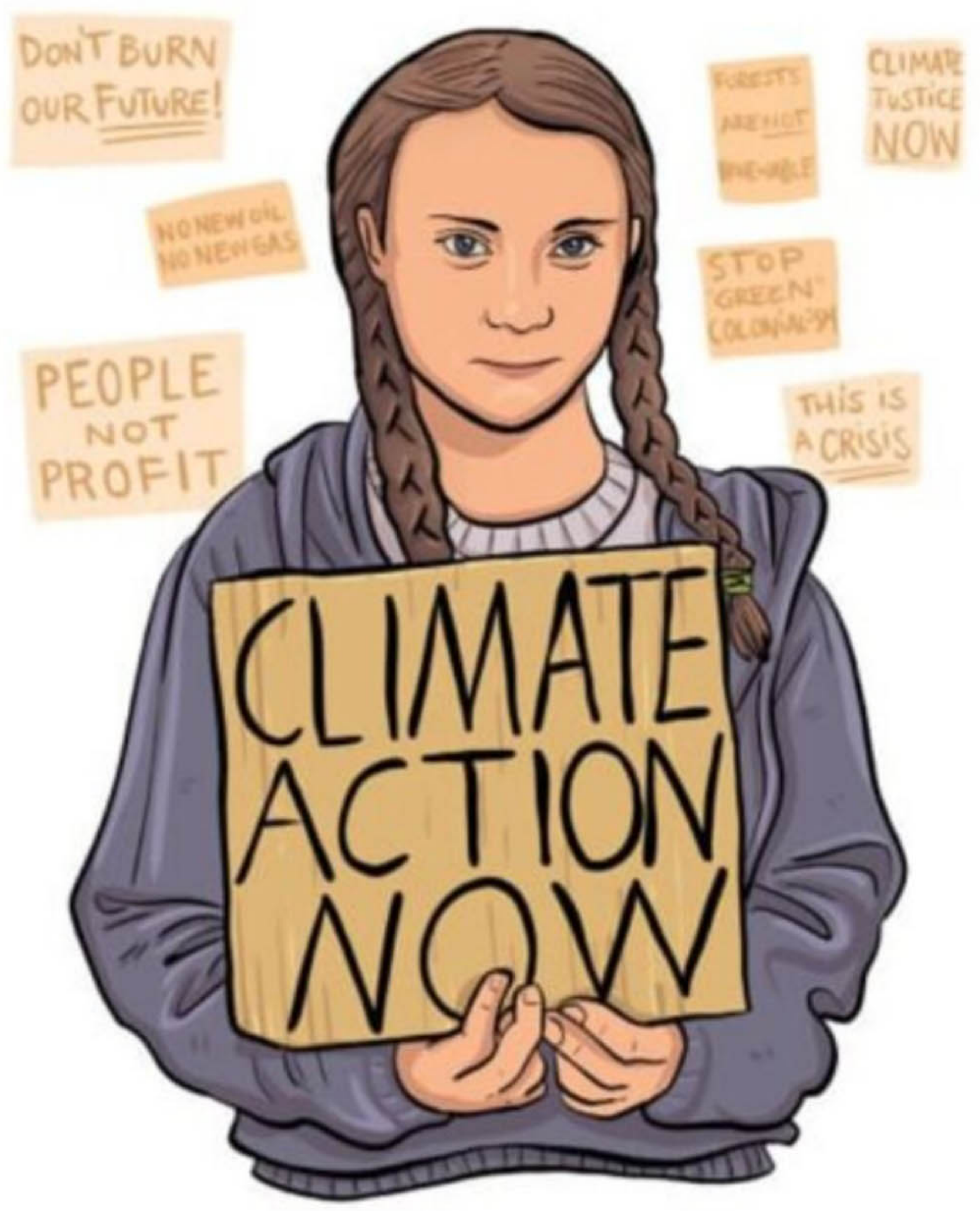
Fun Facts

GRETA HAS ASPERGER'S SYNDROME, WHICH SHE CALLS A "SUPERPOWER"



Greta Thunberg

Greta Thunberg's impact on climate activism continues to evolve and grow. Beyond her famous climate strikes, which mobilized more than 1.6 million people from 125 countries, she's expanded her activism to include other causes. She's now supporting various humanitarian causes while maintaining her focus on environmental justice, showing how climate activism intersects with other global challenges.

Thunberg had selective mutism as a child—making her transformation into a well-known global speaker even more incredible.

MICRO-VOLUNTEERING

LOOKING TO make a difference in small bursts? Here are some impactful ways to create positive change:

- Translate documents for Translators Without Borders, helping refugees and crisis-affected communities access vital healthcare and education information (15 minutes)
- Write a thoughtful review for your local bookstore or family-owned restaurant—it might just help them survive in an age of big-box competition (5 minutes)
- Share a verified fundraising campaign on your social networks, amplifying causes from disaster relief to educational initiatives that might otherwise go unnoticed (30 seconds)
- Connect with visually impaired individuals through Be My Eyes to help them navigate daily tasks like checking expiration dates or reading instructions (3 minutes)
- Join the Smithsonian Digital Volunteers to transcribe historical documents, making centuries of handwritten records accessible to researchers worldwide (10 minutes)
- Photograph and identify local flora and fauna on iNaturalist, contributing to global biodiversity research and helping scientists track species distribution (2 minutes)
- Offer your professional skills through Catchafire or UN Volunteers, providing quick consultations to non-profits who couldn't otherwise afford expert guidance (15–30 minutes)
- Proofread grant applications or newsletters for grassroots organizations, helping them maintain professional communications on tight budgets (20 minutes)
- Help map crisis-affected areas through OpenStreetMap, providing crucial data to emergency responders during natural disasters (10 minutes)
- Record short sections of audiobooks for LibriVox, making literature accessible to those with visual impairments or learning disabilities (30 minutes)
- Classify images for scientific research through Zooniverse, helping researchers analyze vast amounts of data in fields from astronomy to zoology (5 minutes)

Bana al-Abed

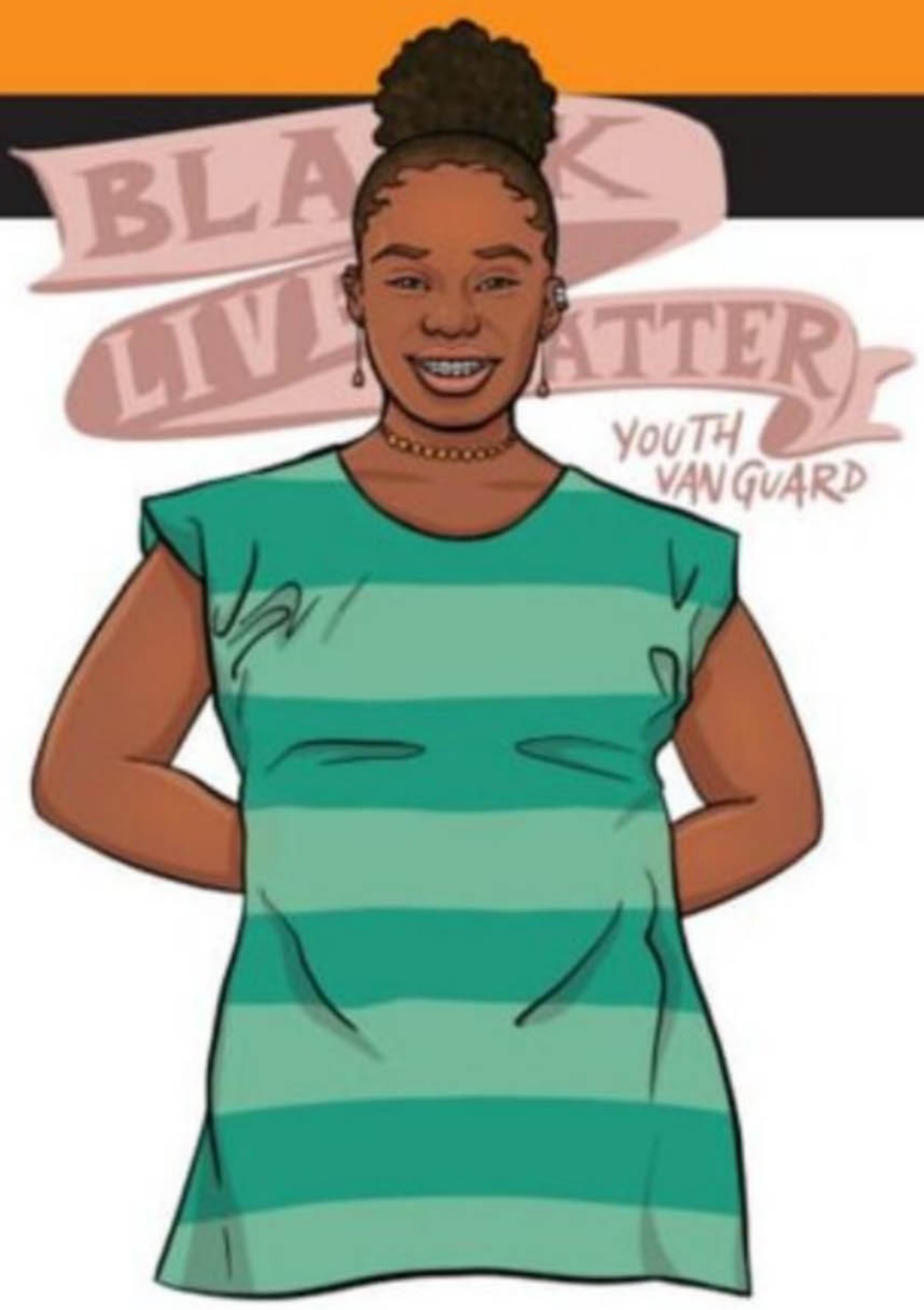
Bana al-Abed showed the world what was really happening in Syria when she was just seven years old, documenting the harsh realities of hunger, airstrikes, and civil war through her tweets. Her powerful messages caught the world's attention, and she's now a published author who continues to advocate for peace and children's rights in conflict zones. "I hope my book will make the world do something for the children and people of Syria and bring peace to children all over the world who are living in war," al-Abed said in a statement through her publisher, Simon & Schuster.

Ryan Hickman

Ryan Hickman has been making waves in environmental activism since he was three. He started Ryan's Recycling Company, which has prevented more than 170,000 pounds of recyclables from ending up in our oceans. Recognized internationally for his efforts, he was awarded "Citizen of the Year" by his hometown of San Juan Capistrano, California. His work has raised over $10,000 for the Pacific Marine Mammal Center, and he's advocated in Washington, DC, for standardized recycling labels.

Robby Novak (Kid President)

Robby Novak, a.k.a. Kid President, has been inspiring millions with his infectious energy and wisdom since he was a child. His famous pep talk video has garnered 49 million YouTube views, and he's hung out with the Obamas at the White House, co-authored a best-selling book, and taught Tom Hanks how to do the "Whip/Nae Nae." He even partnered with ConAgra Foods and Feeding America to donate 100,000 meals to children. "Me and my friends, we love to talk politics," Novak, who's now 21 years old, told Today.com. "But one rule we have is that you have to be open to hear every perspective."



Thandiwe Abdullah

When it comes to social justice, Thandiwe Abdullah isn't just speaking up—they're making real change happen. After helping launch the Black Lives Matter Youth Vanguard, they've achieved concrete victories, including successfully pushing for the reallocation of 25 million dollars from the L.A. Schools Police Department to the L.A. Unified School Districts. Abdullah's work focuses on creating safe spaces for Black youth to organize and address racism, particularly in schools.

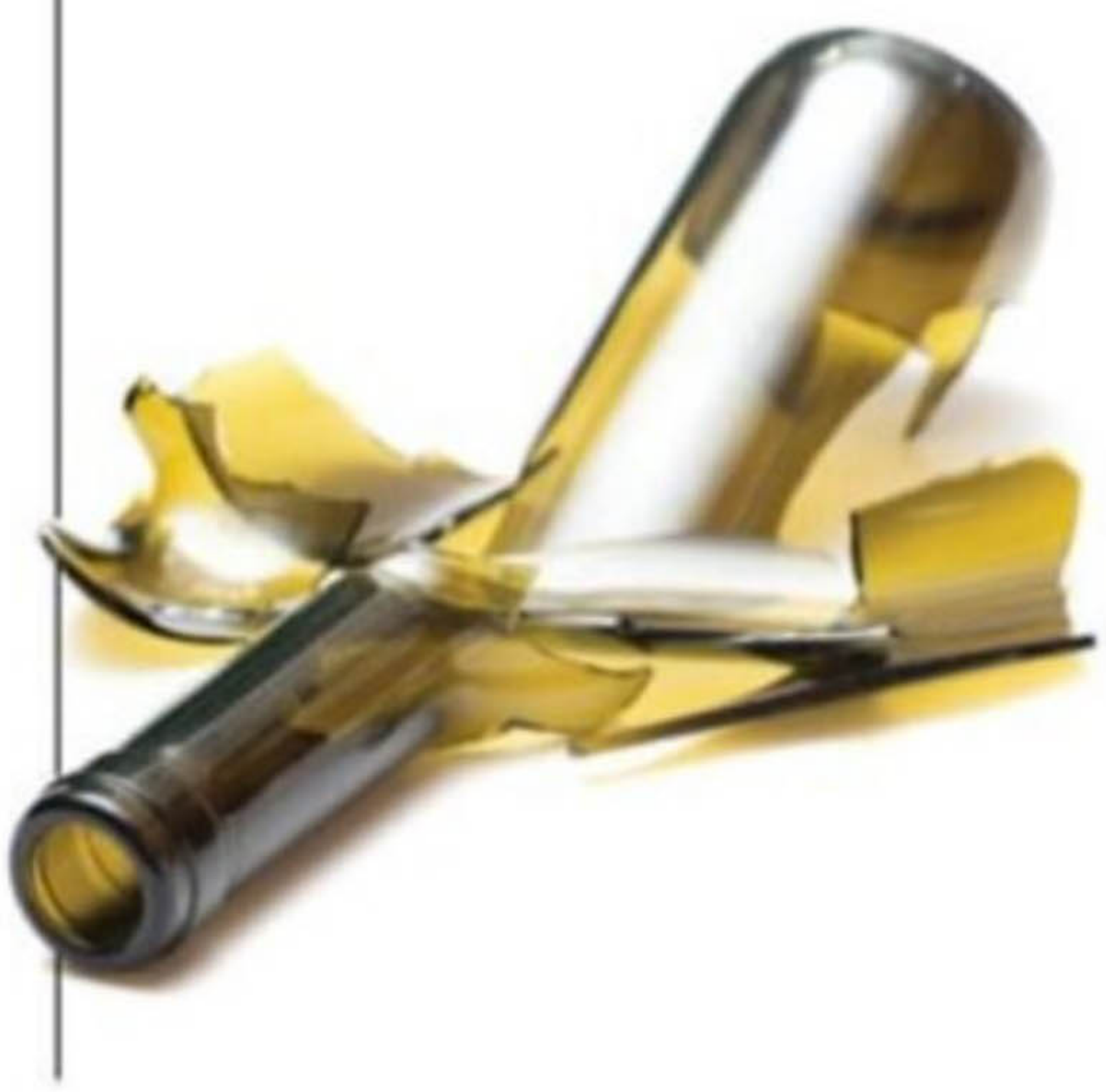
Daisy Hampton

New York City's Daisy Hampton saw how the pandemic was affecting her peers, so she founded Including You, which builds friendships with students who have disabilities and helps bridge the digital divide. "It's really hard for me to see someone suffering, experiencing unkindness," Hampton explained on the "People Making a Difference" podcast. "I want to do something about that. So if I know I have the power to help, I know I need to take the compassion I feel and use that to try and assist." Her work has been a game-changer for kids who might otherwise fall through the cracks.

These young changemakers share something remarkable: They didn't wait for permission to make a difference. They saw problems in their communities and the world at large, and they stepped up. Their ages didn't define their abilities—their determination and vision did. Whether it's through environmental activism, social justice, education, or simple acts of kindness, they've shown that change can start with anyone, anywhere, at any age. ☺

Want more? Check out TIME magazine's Kid of the Year nominees at time.com/collections/kid-of-the-year-2024.

GLASS HALF FULL



• **ONE PERSON'S** trash is Franziska Trautmann's opportunity for change. While studying environmental science at Tulane University, college senior Trautmann became increasingly frustrated by the massive amount of glass waste in New Orleans that typically ended up in landfills. She started Glass Half Full to turn glass waste back into sand for coastal restoration and disaster relief, initially experimenting in her college backyard with recycling techniques she'd learned in her environmental engineering classes and coursework in sustainable development. Her process involves multiple stages of glass processing: first, collecting and sorting glass by color, then using industrial crushers to break down the material, followed by precise screening to create uniform particle sizes.

The resulting "glass sand" can be used for everything from rebuilding eroded coastlines to providing critical fill material in disaster reconstruction efforts. "We use it for disaster relief, coastal restoration, construction, landscaping, flooring," Trautman explained on PBS News Hour. "And now, instead of glass going to the landfill, we're able to turn it into a usable product." What began as a student project now processes 3,000 pounds of glass per hour, proving that academic insights can become powerful real-world solutions.

SAVING OUR SEA LIFE

ONCE HUNTERS OF SEA CREATURES, THESE FISHERMEN DECIDED TO PROTECT THE OCEANS INSTEAD

Frank Mundus was known as the real-life Captain Quint long before the movie *Jaws* hit theaters. For over 50 years, he chartered his boat Cricket II off Montauk, New York, earning a reputation for catching some of the largest sharks ever recorded. But what many people don't know is that this legendary fisherman underwent a remarkable transformation. In his later years, Mundus began actively promoting shark conservation and advocating for less damaging varieties of hooks, showing that even the most successful commercial fishermen could change their ways.

THE
"MONSTER MAN"
FRANK MUNDUS
ICK

THESE FORMER FISHERMEN BRING UNIQUE INSIGHTS AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE TO CONSERVATIONS EFFORTS.

This pattern of transformation from hunter to protector isn't unique to Mundus. Take Michel "Goff" Strogoff, who grew up in a semi-nomadic tribe in Madagascar. As a member of the Vezo fishing tribe, Goff once participated in destructive fishing practices, targeting sharks, turtles, and sea cucumbers. Today, he's become one of Madagascar's leading conservation wildlife filmmakers, using his camera instead of nets to capture marine life and inspire others to protect it. "I care a lot about our oceans. I had no real formal education but the sea was there to provide for me, my family and my community," he explained in an interview with PADI.com. "If we don't improve the way that fisheries are managed, I am worried fish stocks will collapse and that there will be nothing left to support future generations and our planet. This is what drives me to do the work that I do. I want to help to give people a voice and to stand up against those that are destroying our environment."

Similar success stories are emerging worldwide. On Indonesia's Lombok Island, former shark fishermen have transformed into environmental educators, teaching the next generation about marine conservation. In Italy's Puglia region, local fishermen partnered with conservationists to establish a marine reserve that not only protected sea life but also improved their catches, proving that conservation and livelihood can go hand in hand. "We are the guardians," Italian fisherman Cosimo Di Biasi said in an article on the news website Reasons to Be Cheerful. "This stretch of sea is ours."

The impacts of these transitions have been remarkable. After he had a near-death accident in 2011 on a fishing boat, Didier Laplace of the island of Saint Barthélemy turned his life around and became a marine conservation champion, eventually founding Coral Restoration Saint Barth. "We're working to sensitize the yachts and hotels to the care that's required to keep our island healthy," Laplace told Mission Blue. "We do it for the island, for the community, for everyone." Through their intimate knowledge of the sea and its creatures, these former fishermen bring unique insights and practical experience to conservation efforts, helping bridge the gap between commercial fishing interests and environmental protection.

Green sea turtles, like the one shown above (right), are endangered due to many factors—one of which is overharvesting for their meat and eggs.

Fun Facts

ANYONE WITH INTERNET AND $25 CAN HELP SOMEONE THROUGH KIVA

BECOMING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

IN A WORLD DRIVEN BY PROFITS, A SPECIAL SET OF INNOVATORS USED THEIR IDEAS FOR GOOD

SXSW
Music
Film
TOMS

When Blake Mycoskie visited Argentina in 2006, he witnessed something that would change his life—and millions of others. Seeing children grow up without shoes sparked an idea that would revolutionize social entrepreneurship: TOMS Shoes. His One for One® business model was brilliantly simple: For every pair of shoes purchased, another pair would go to a child in need. The company grew from a startup in his Venice, CA apartment to a $625 million global enterprise, with conscious consumers eagerly buying their casual, comfortable alpargatas—the traditional Argentine slip-on canvas shoes that inspired the brand—proving that profit and purpose could coexist beautifully.

Years before TOMS came along, Muhammad Yunus was quietly revolutionizing banking in Bangladesh. Back in 1983, he had what seemed like a crazy idea at the time: Give small loans to the poorest people, especially women, without asking for collateral. The first loan he personally gave was $27 to a group of women making bamboo furniture. Today, that simple idea has grown into Grameen Bank, which has given $37 billion in collateral-free loans to more than 10 million people.

Inspired by Yunus's groundbreaking work in microfinance, Jessica Jackley saw an opportunity to bring his vision into the digital age. She co-

CLAY
WATER
BRICK
JESSICA JACKLEY

founded Kiva in 2005, creating the world's first person-to-person microlending website. It started with her sharing stories about entrepreneurs she met in East Africa, and turned into something massive. Today, Kiva has channeled over $1.6 billion in loans worldwide. "Kiva does a lot of different things, but our mission is to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty," Jackley told the National Center for Women & Information Technology in an interview. "Loans happen to be a great tool for poverty alleviation as well as connectivity. I mean, if you lend me something, and I have it, and I'm fully giving it back to you, you're going to pay a little bit more attention, usually, than if you just donate something…It's quick. It's real time. You can see on the other side of the planet how this person is waiting right now today for that $200 that's going to allow them to start their business."

Then there's Rachel Brathen, better known as Yoga Girl® to her millions of followers. She's shown how social media influence can be about more than just sharing inspiring content. This entrepreneur has built multiple companies and a non-profit organization. Her Yoga Girl® Foundation supports some groups of women and children in Aruba, proving that the digital age has opened up entirely new ways to make a difference.

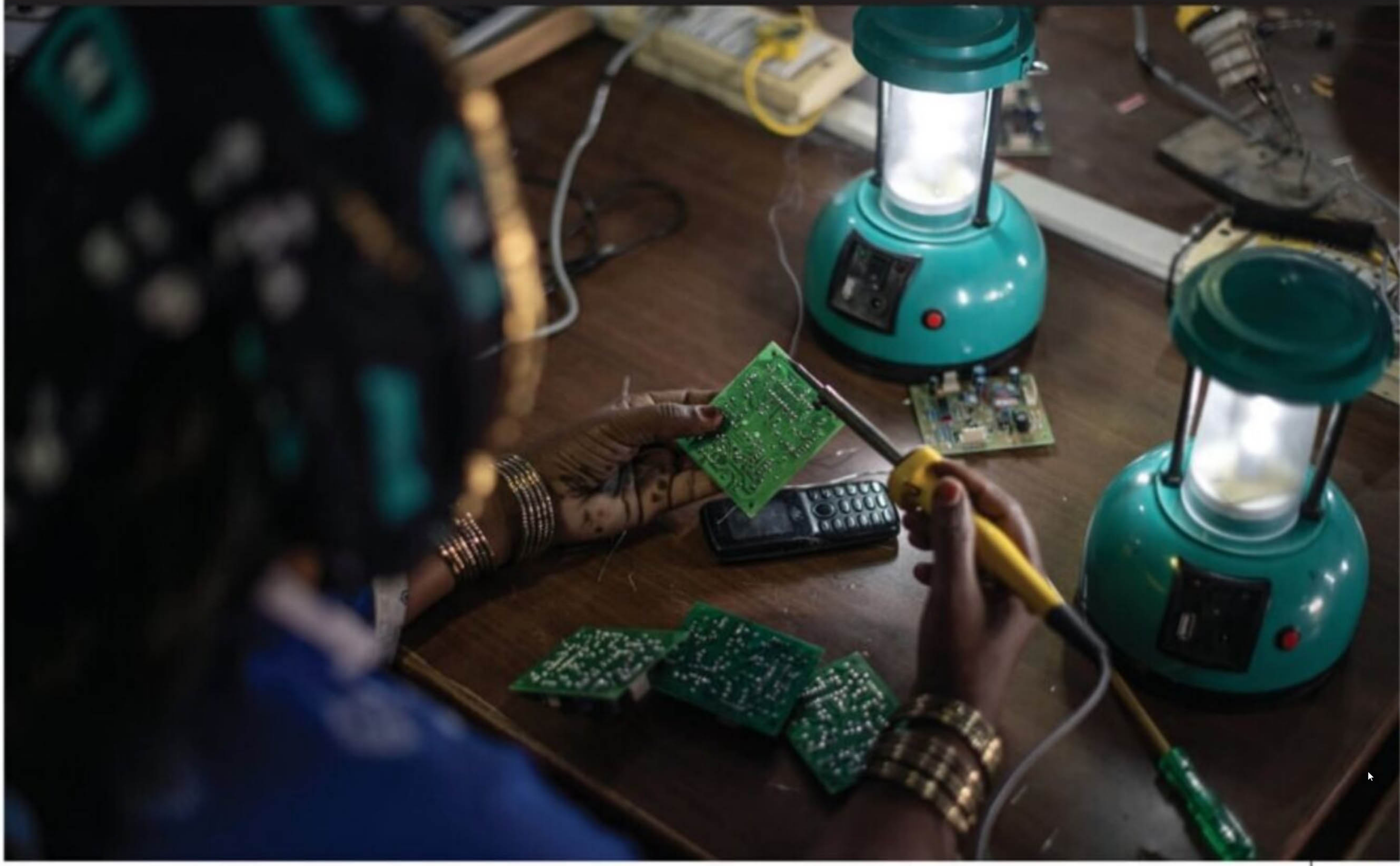
These changemakers are just the tip of the iceberg. Bill Drayton—who actually coined the term "social entrepreneur" and founded Ashoka, the world's largest network of social innovators—has helped thousands of innovators turn their world-changing ideas into reality through his global organization that identifies and supports leading social entrepreneurs. Then there's Marc Koska, who took on a massive health crisis by inventing the K1 auto-disable syringe—a needle that locks and breaks after one use—credited with saving 10 million lives from the reuse of contaminated needles. What these stories tell us is simple: When business smarts meet social purpose, amazing things happen.

It's no wonder that both Muhammad Yunus (pictured to the left) and Grameen Bank won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.

THE KINDNESS MULTIPLIER EFFECT

• **SCIENTISTS AT** the University of Virginia have discovered something fascinating about kindness: It's contagious, but not like a cold—more like a spark that lights up a whole room. When someone experiences an act of kindness, their brain releases feel-good chemicals like oxytocin and dopamine, making them more likely to help others. This creates what researchers call a "behavioral cascade," in which a single thoughtful gesture can trigger a chain reaction of goodwill that ripples through communities.

This multiplier effect isn't just feel-good theory; it's backed by hard data. Studies tracking acts of kindness have found that a single generous action typically inspires more good deeds by others. Even more intriguing, researchers at Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center have shown that simply witnessing kindness—whether you're the recipient or just a bystander—can boost your energy levels and increase your likelihood of helping others. The science is clear: When we show one moment of kindness, we're potentially touching dozens of lives through an invisible chain of pay-it-forward moments.



LIGHTING UP RURAL PLACES

TRAINED GROUPS OF "SOLAR MAMAS" BRING TECH KNOW-HOW TO REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Across remote villages worldwide, a quiet revolution is taking place. While more than 700 million people still flip switches to no effect, a remarkable group of engineers—all of them women from rural communities—are transforming how their villages access power. They're called "Solar Mamas," and they're showing the world what's possible when you combine technical training with deep community knowledge.

On the island of Zanzibar alone, 65 women have become solar engineers since 2015, bringing electricity to nearly 1,900 houses across 29 villages. Think about that for a minute: Villages that never had power now have lights, all thanks to grandmothers and mothers who decided to become engineers. The best part? The ripple effects are showing up everywhere. In the Toledo District of Belize, indigenous women who've completed the same program are transforming their remote villages. Far beyond just installing solar panels, they're maintaining them, fixing problems, and teaching others in their community how it all works. And they're part of something huge: Solar Mamas have now installed more than 175,000 solar systems in villages around the world.

The program's six-month training at Barefoot College is intense and immersive. Women learn everything from identifying electronic components to fabricating complete solar units.

Barefoot College in India was founded in 1972 with a mission to empower rural communities.

The genius of the program lies in its practical approach: Trainees work with color-coded circuit boards and shapes, making complex technical concepts accessible regardless of language or literacy. “I never gave up because I wanted to help my community,” explained Solar Mama Florentina Choco, a resident of Santa Teresa village in Toledo, Belize, in an interview with the GEF Small Grants Programme. “I wanted to help the school children have light at home to do their homework. My aim was to complete my training and come home with my skills.” Alongside their solar engineering classes, the women participate in a program called ENRICHE, which builds additional skills in everything from financial literacy to digital competency. And here’s something most people don’t know: The program specifically seeks out middle-aged and older women. “Many opportunities don’t reach such women,” said Brenda Geofrey, the director of programs and operations at Barefoot College Zanzibar, in *The Guardian*. “We want to change their mindset from thinking they were just born to be mothers and to raise children to knowing they can be professionals.” They’re also more likely to stay and serve their communities for the long haul. It turns out that when you’re looking for commitment to community development, grandmothers are often your best bet.

Fun Facts

BAREFOOT COLLEGE NOW HAS PROGRAMMING IN 93 COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD

VILLAGES NOW HAVE LIGHTS, ALL THANKS TO MOTHERS-TURNED-ENGINEERS.

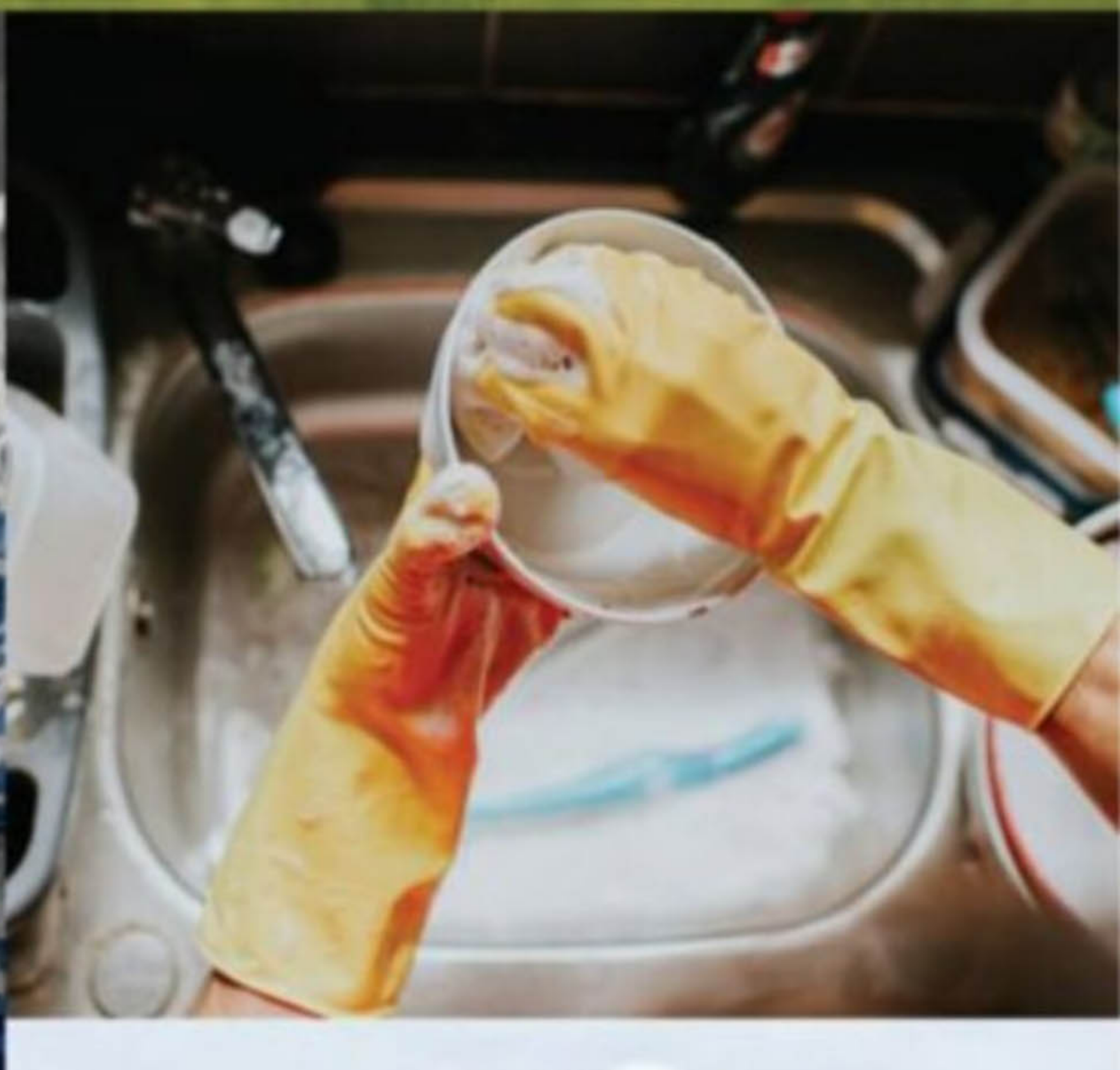
SECTION 3

Unexpected HAPPINESS

JOY CAN HAPPEN ANYWHERE—EVEN WHERE YOU'D LEAST EXPECT IT

Life has a delightful way of hiding little pockets of happiness in the most surprising places. From yarn-bombed trees that transform mundane city streets into cozy art galleries to prison choirs whose harmonies break down walls between hearts, beauty blooms in unlikely corners. These moments remind us that joy isn't only found in grand gestures or planned celebrations—it's woven into the fabric of everyday life, waiting to be discovered.

Sometimes it takes a wrong turn to find exactly where we're meant to be, or a chance encounter at a train station to spark a friendship that spans decades and continents. The world brims with these quiet miracles: medical clowns bringing laughter to hospital halls, broken pottery pieced back together with gold seams, and strangers joining hands in spontaneous dance beneath city streets. These are the stories that remind us how wonderfully unpredictable life can be, and how magic tends to find us precisely when we least expect it.



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YARN BOMBING

HOW A SIMPLE DECORATIVE DOOR HANDLE COVER GREW INTO AN ARTISTIC AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT

In the early 2000s, a quirky form of street art started popping up in Houston, Texas, that would soon spread across the globe. Instead of spray paint or stencils, this new movement used something unexpectedly soft and fuzzy: yarn. Magda Sayeg, now known as the mother of yarn bombing, kicked off this creative revolution when she decided to knit a cozy for her boutique's door handle, transforming an ordinary metal fixture into something that made people smile. Soon, other knitters and crocheters caught on, and a widespread phenomenon was born.

What makes yarn bombing unique is its gentle approach to street art. Also known as yarn storming, guerrilla knitting, or urban knitting, this art form involves covering everyday objects with colorful knitted or crocheted pieces. Trees get warm sweaters, bike racks sport rainbow cozies, and even city benches receive soft, woolly makeovers. Unlike traditional graffiti, yarn bombs can be easily removed without damaging the underlying surface, making them a welcome addition to most urban spaces. "When you stumble upon a stop sign pole that's wrapped in knitting, and it seems so out of place, and then…gradually, weirdly, you find a connection to it, that is the moment. That is the moment I love," Sayeg explained in an interview with National Public Radio. "And that is the moment I love to share with others."

WHAT MAKES YARN BOMBING UNIQUE IS ITS GENTLE APPROACH TO STREET ART.

A "Knit the Bridge" yarn bombing event took place at the Andy Warhol Bridge in Pittsburgh (shown to the left).

Some of the most ambitious yarn bombing projects have captured global attention. In 2013, artists covered the entire Andy Warhol Bridge in Pittsburgh with knitted panels, creating the largest yarn bomb ever recorded. Another installation transformed a gas station in Syracuse, New York, using over 600 yards of quilts, textiles, and yarn. These large-scale projects bring communities together, with knitting groups working for months to create the pieces needed for an installation.

The movement has evolved far beyond its humble beginnings, finding its way into museums, public art installations, even political statements. While some yarn bombers work solo and incognito, others collaborate with cities and businesses to create authorized installations that brighten up public spaces. The practice has also taken on new meaning during times of social change, with yarn bombers using their craft to draw attention to various causes. Environmental activists have used yarn bombs to protest tree removal in urban areas, while others have created installations promoting women's rights, racial equality, and peace. In 2024, for instance, activists in Montrose, Texas, wrapped mature oak trees in colorful yarn to protest their planned removal. "I love that, in some way, I have contributed to showing the strength of this craft—knitting and crocheting doesn't have to be functional, it can be subversive, renegade—even illegal in certain cases," Sayeg noted in an interview with Design Milk. "And it makes me proud, as a woman, to be a part of something that is so powerful." Whether it's a simple tree sweater or an elaborate architectural covering, each yarn bomb carries the same message: adding a touch of color to our concrete world.

SINGING BEHIND BARS

PRISON CHOIR GROUPS ARE INSTILLING A SENSE OF HUMANITY IN THE INCARCERATED COMMUNITY

Inside prison walls, an unexpected sound cuts through the silence: voices joined in song. The Liberty Choir, established in UK prisons, has become a beacon of hope, bringing together inmates and community volunteers to create something truly remarkable. Through weekly sessions at Wandsworth Prison, the choir has shown how music can bridge divides and transform lives. Ross, an inmate at Wandsworth, recalled his first time singing, in an interview with *The Guardian*: "From then I knew there was a space I could be safe in. I could be free in that room with the choir for a couple of hours a week. There was genuine freedom in that room. The love from those people that came to see us was so important." And the numbers speak for themselves: In 2024 alone, the organization sang with over 2,500 prisoners in 200 choir rehearsals.

The idea has caught on in America, too. The East Hills Singers at Kansas's Lansing Correctional Facility have made such an impact that their story became a documentary called *Conducting Hope*. "One former inmate who has continued to sing with the choir said that while in prison, singing made him feel like he was human in a place where there is little humanity," said the documentary's producer and director, Margie Friedman, in an interview with Chorus America. "Now, of course, recent scientific studies show that to be the case—that group singing reduces depression and does in fact, increase overall wellbeing. Personally, as I watched the men rehearse and then, perform in a concert, I was struck by the joy they experience while singing. They could have been any group of singers from anywhere." These music programs are helping incarcerated individuals redefine themselves as returning citizens rather than felons, creating a new narrative for their lives through the power of song.

What makes the programs really shine is how they bring people together. Take The Prison Choir Project in the UK, which connects professional musicians, prisoners, ex-offenders, and community members to perform opera, choral music, and other vocal arrangements. This kind of interaction shatters stereotypes and builds bridges that extend well beyond prison walls. In Central Ohio, the Harmony Project has grown to include more than many voices—over 1,000 sing with them each week—and has established music programs across multiple correctional facilities.

The real magic happens when these programs bring together people from all walks of life. When prison choirs include both incarcerated individuals and free citizens, they create powerful community-building opportunities between groups that wouldn't necessarily interact otherwise. Some groups even take it a step further, inviting victim-impact speakers to share their stories during rehearsals. These initiatives prove that music is a vital tool for rehabilitation, connection, and personal growth. Right now, organizations like Liberty Choir have set their sights high: Liberty Choir wants to establish a choir in four more prisions this year alone, and looking at its track record, it might just pull it off.

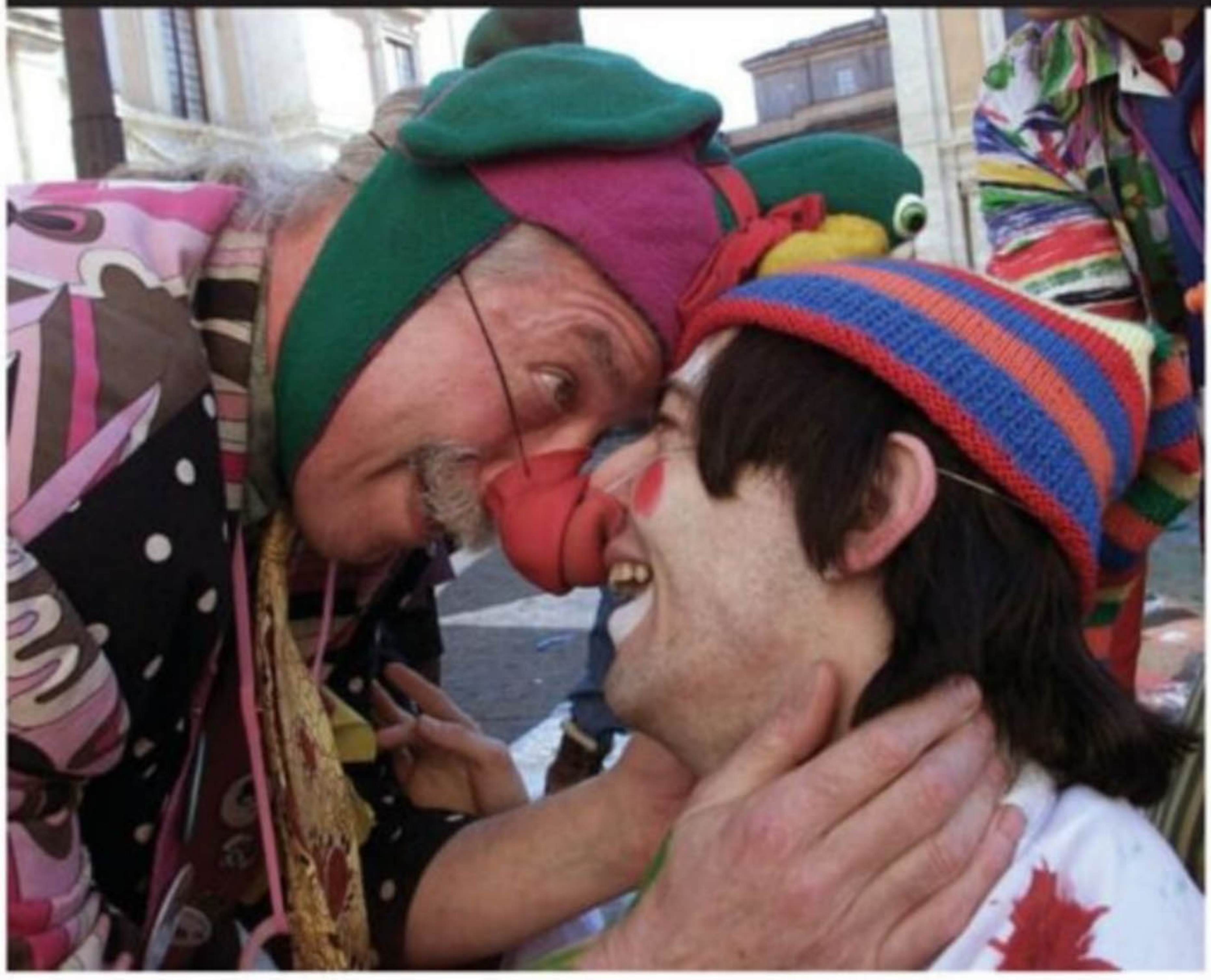
WHAT MAKES THE PROGRAMS SHINE IS HOW THEY BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER.

Attendees, including Britain's King Charles III, listened to a choir performance by inmates at Dartmoor Prison during a 2018 visit.

THE 1000 MILE CLUB

• **WITHIN THE** walls of San Quentin—California's oldest prison and one of its most notorious maximum-security facilities—an unlikely story of transformation unfolds each week on the yard's quarter-mile track. In 2005, when prison liaison Laura Bowman reached out to the local Tamalpa Running Club for help establishing a running program, only one coach stepped forward: Frank Ruona, a former Army officer and USA Track and Field certified coach who had already completed 78 marathons and 38 ultramarathons of his own. Those first training sessions were simple but structured—Monday evening workouts where a small group of inmates would gather in the yard, learning the basics of proper form and pacing. Ruona, who was already in his 60s, worked with the men to build their endurance gradually, starting with short runs and eventually working up to monthly races.

Today, the club has evolved into a year-round training program that culminates in one of the most unique marathons in the world. Every year, runners tackle the daunting 26.2-mile distance by completing 105 laps around the prison yard past fellow inmates going about their daily routines. The training builds steadily through weekly evening sessions, with members first working toward a mile, then a 5K, half marathon, and finally the full marathon. From those early days with just a handful of participants, the program has produced remarkable athletes—some completing the marathon in just over three hours—and has become a model for prison running programs elsewhere.



LAUGHTER AS MEDICINE

PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL CLOWNS PUT SMILES ON PATIENTS' FACES ALL OVER THE WORLD

When Dr. Hunter "Patch" Adams first put on a red nose in a hospital setting, he sparked a movement that would transform healthcare environments worldwide. His pioneering work established the foundation for what we now know as medical clowning, a professionally recognized practice where specially trained performers use humor and playfulness to support patient healing. Today, these "clown doctors" are far more than entertainers: They're healthcare professionals who undergo rigorous training in both performing arts and medical protocols.

One of the field's most influential pioneers is Michael Christensen, who co-founded the Big Apple Circus Clown Care Unit. Known professionally as "Mr. Stubs," Christensen revolutionized hospital clowning by developing structured programs and training protocols that would later be adopted by healthcare facilities worldwide. "Some doctors would say, 'Clowns don't belong in hospitals'… Well, neither do children," Christensen explains, capturing the true compassion behind medical clowning. "There are a lot of modes of thought out there about the benefits of humor in healthcare settings: People sometimes call us therapeutic clowns, healing clowns, or therapists," he explained in an interview with Priceonomics. "But we can't stand in a hospital doorway looking into a sick child and think about therapy. We can't think about being psychologists. We can't think about what positive effects being a professional idiot has on children. We simply have to be open and receptive, with no agenda other than to identify that little spark of wonder and magnify it. When we do that, the room fills with vitality: That alone is our reward."

THE IMPACT OF MEDICAL CLOWNS EXTENDS FAR BEYOND ENTERTAINMENT.

The impact of medical clowns extends far beyond simple entertainment. Recent research published in the journal *Scientific Reports* has shown that children who interact with medical clowns before bedtime experience improved sleep quality and shorter hospital stays. In Israel, where medical clowning has become deeply integrated into the healthcare system, approximately 100 clowns work across nearly all major hospitals, demonstrating the growing recognition of humor as a valuable therapeutic tool. "Kids run after them," noted Giora Pillar, head of the department of pediatrics at Carmel Medical Center in Haifa, Israel, to *Moment* magazine. "They are passionately asking for them; sometimes they'll follow them to another room."

The training to become a medical clown is intensive. Candidates must pass an audition, complete an internship, and in some cases, complete hundreds of hours of professional development. These healthcare artists must master the art of reading rooms, understanding medical environments, and adapting their performance to suit patient needs. Their work requires a delicate balance of humor and sensitivity, particularly when working with patients facing serious conditions.

Medical clowns use everything from "red nose transplants" to "funny bone exams" to help demystify complex procedures and ease patient anxiety.

Fun Facts

THE ICONIC RED CLOWN NOSE WAS POPULARIZED AROUND THE 1920S

THE JOY OF BEING LOST

LIFE'S DETOURS HAVE A WAY OF LEADING TO BEAUTIFUL THINGS

Science, it turns out, supports the value of getting lost. According to reporting from Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center, embracing uncertainty and unfamiliar territory actually improves our learning ability, decision-making skills, and even our mental health. When we encounter something new or unexpected, our brains release a subtle stress response that makes us more receptive to new information—our attention broadens and our working memory improves. Studies have shown that this state of productive uncertainty enhances creativity and problem-solving abilities. Even more fascinating, research reported in *Psychology Today* suggests that moments of being "lost" in thought—what scientists call mind-wandering—can lead to improved mood, enhanced creativity, and better long-term planning. It's as if our brains are designed to benefit from occasionally losing their way.

From Calligraphy Class to Computer Revolution

Steve Jobs once stood in a calligraphy class at Reed College, completely lost as to how this art form could ever be useful in his life. He had dropped out of regular classes, and was just wandering into whatever caught his interest. "None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life," Jobs said in a 2005 Stanford commencement address. "But 10 years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me." That seemingly pointless detour became the foundation for the first Macintosh computer's revolutionary typography—including beloved font classics like Geneva and Chicago—a feature that would transform desktop publishing and influence

Pictured to the right is Steve Jobs posing with a room full of computers in 1984.

Fun Facts

THE CONCEPT OF THE FIRST COMPUTER IS CREDITED TO CHARLES BABBAGE IN 1822

computer design for decades to come. "If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts," Jobs said. "And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them. If I had never dropped out, I would have never dropped in on this calligraphy class, and personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do."

The "Failed" Formula That Stuck

Getting lost—whether intentionally or by accident—has a peculiar way of leading us to exactly where we need to be. Take the story of Spencer Silver, a scientist at 3M who was trying to develop a super-strong adhesive in 1968. Instead, he accidentally created a surprisingly weak, pressure-sensitive adhesive that seemed almost useless. "Using the adhesive, the company developed a bulletin board that remained permanently tacky so that notes could be stuck and removed. But I was frustrated," Silver said in an interview with the *Financial Times*. "I felt my adhesive was so obviously unique that I began to give seminars throughout 3M in the hope I would spark an idea among its product developers." It wasn't until years later when his colleague Art Fry was losing his place in his church hymnal that the idea struck: This "failed" adhesive would make perfect removable bookmarks. That wrong turn in the laboratory eventually became Post-it® Notes—now a billion-dollar product line (3M produces 50 billion notes each year).

Pictured above is Elizabeth Arden in the make-up testing lab in August of 1965.

Lost Dreams, Found Fortune

Life's detours often yield the sweetest rewards. Consider Elizabeth Arden, whose real name was Florence Nightingale Graham. After dropping out of nursing school, she had odd jobs like secretarial work and bookkeeping. After this period of being professionally "lost," she opened a beauty salon with a partner (Elizabeth Hubbard) on New York City's Fifth Avenue. This first business venture unfortunately failed; but Elizabeth vowed to stay in the beauty business, eventually building Elizabeth

Arden Inc.—one of the world's most successful cosmetics empires that's worth billions today.

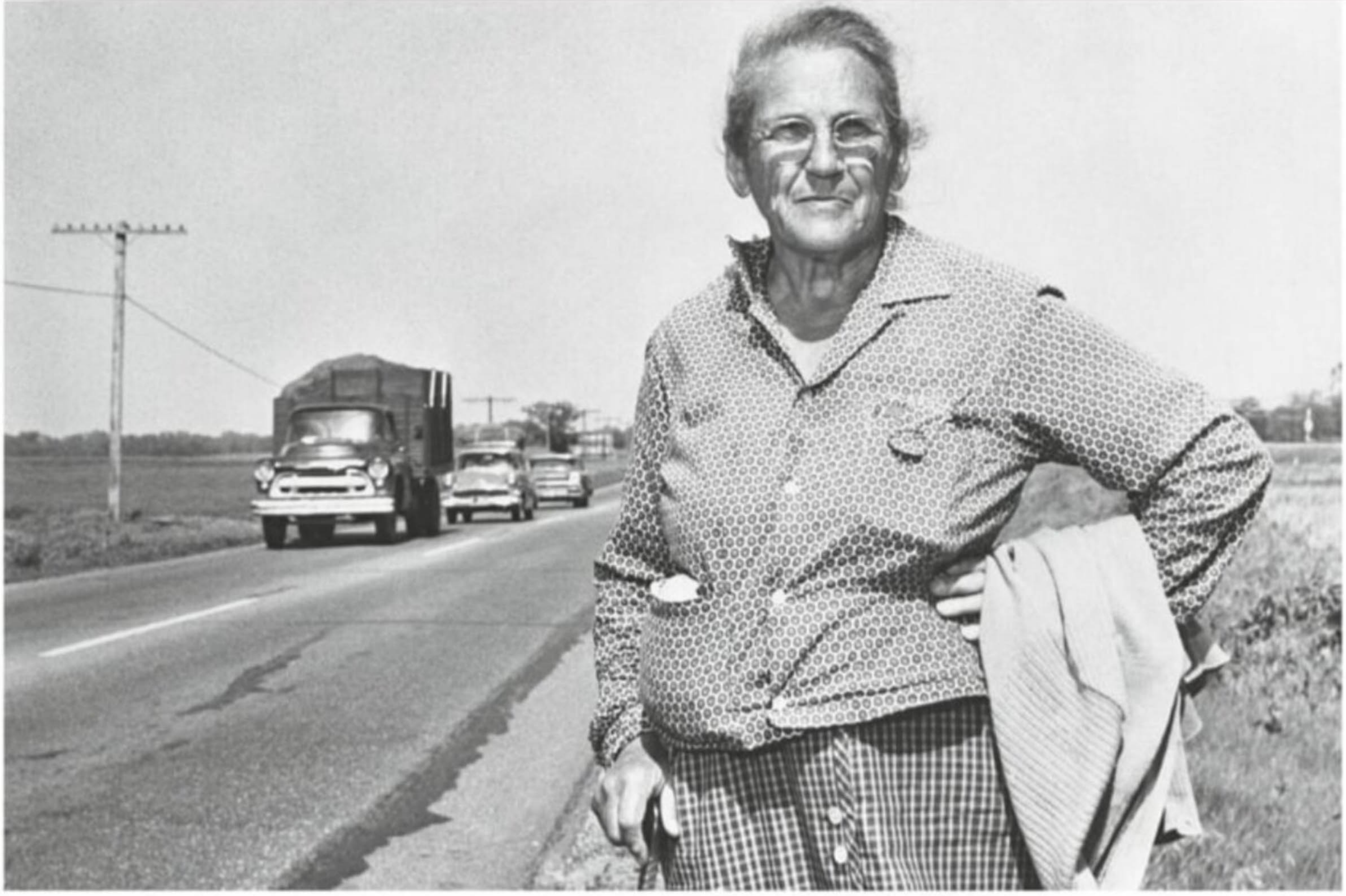
The Best Rejection of Oprah's Life

Sometimes life's greatest—and most successful—finds come from personal detours. Oprah Winfrey was famously fired from her job as a television anchor in Baltimore, where she was reportedly told by a producer that she was "unfit for television news." "I was removed from the 6 p.m. news exactly April 1, 1977," Winfrey told the *Baltimore Sun* in an interview. "The general manager called me upstairs, and I thought it was an April Fool's joke." She could still remember the exact conversation. "As you know, when you're humiliated that way, you never forget," she said. Lost and devastated, she was reassigned to a daytime talk show—a seeming demotion that turned out to be her true calling, as she had the #1 daytime show for more than two decades and now has a media empire worth billions. During this period of professional uncertainty, she also met Stedman Graham at a charity event she almost skipped. That chance encounter led to a life-long partnership, proving that sometimes our lowest moments can lead us to our highest joys.

Finding Magic in the Unplanned

Perhaps the most profound examples of beneficial lostness come from everyday life, where small moments of wandering lead to extraordinary discoveries. In a world increasingly governed by GPS and optimization algorithms, where every route is pre-planned and every decision data-driven, we've nearly forgotten the art of getting productively lost. There's something magical about taking a wrong turn in a new city and stumbling upon a hidden courtyard cafe that becomes your favorite spot, or boarding the wrong subway train and meeting a stranger who changes your life. Maybe it's mis-

> **"THE GENERAL MANAGER CALLED ME UPSTAIRS, AND I THOUGHT IT WAS AN APRIL FOOLS JOKE."**



EMMA GATEWOOD BECAME THE FIRST WOMAN TO SOLO THRU-HIKE THE ENTIRE APPALACHIAN TRAIL—AT AGE 67.

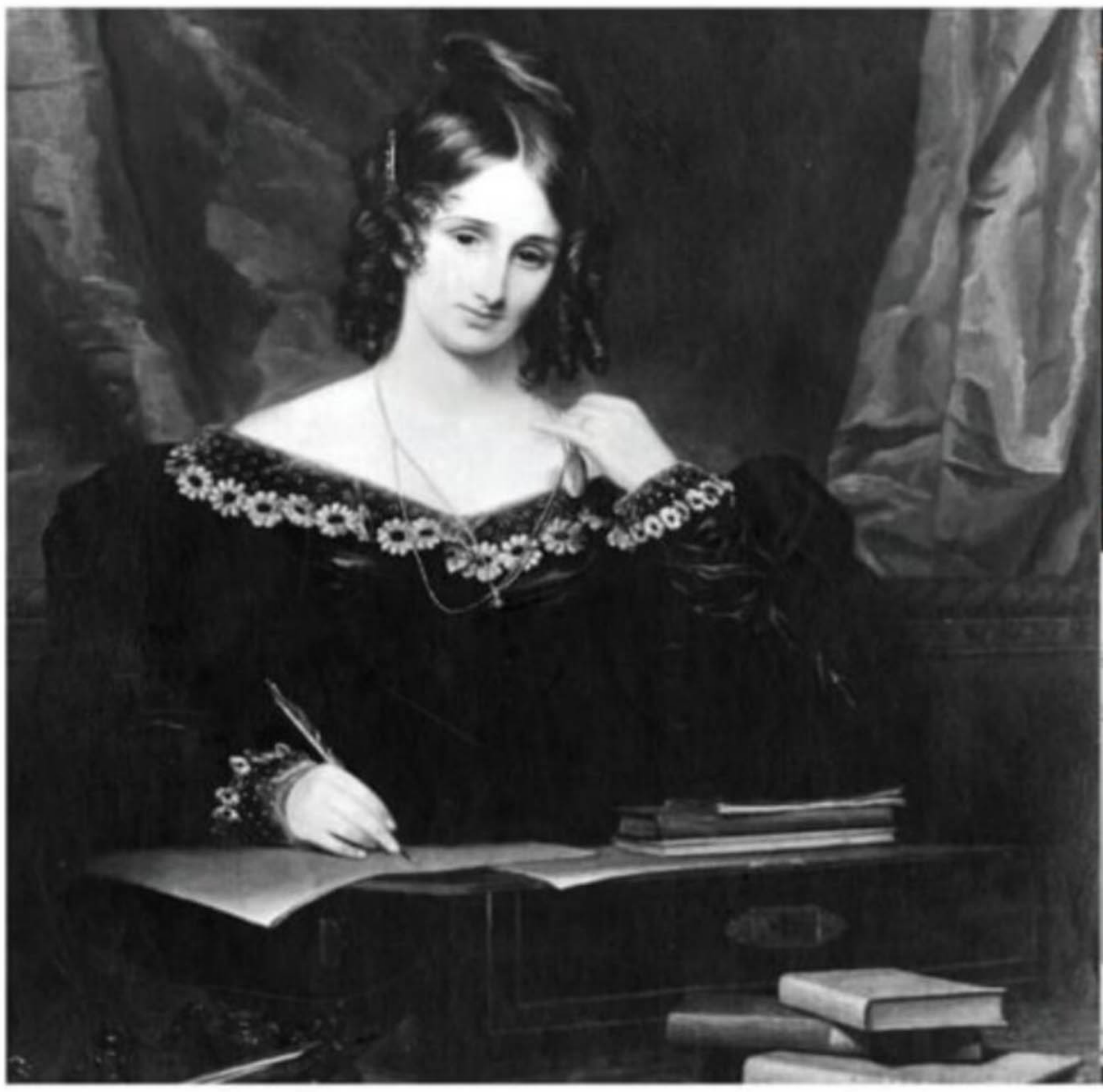
reading a job listing and applying for a position that turns out to become your dream career, or getting rerouted from your normal routine by a snowstorm and discovering a neighborhood you never knew existed.

Consider Jenn Scalia, who found herself divorced, living back with her parents, and nearly broke with a young son to support. That rock-bottom moment became her catalyst for change. She launched her business coaching company, Million Dollar Mommy, teaching other women entrepreneurs how to build their own digital businesses. Within just two years, she built it into a $500,000 enterprise. "Divorce was the best business decision I ever made," she admitted. "Divorce gave me the freedom I needed to become the woman I needed to become," she elaborated in an interview with *Forbes*. "I was stuck in a broke mentality because of my environment. If I had stayed in my marriage, I would not be where I am today…The divorce put me through hell and I feel it needed to happen in order for me to grow up and become a woman responsible for her own self."

Alternatively, take Emma Gatewood, who at age 67 told her family she was "going for a walk" and proceeded to become the first woman to solo thru-hike the entire Appalachian Trail. With no specialized equipment, just canvas sneakers and a denim bag, she completed the 2,190-mile journey in 1955. She got lost countless times along the trail, but each time she found her way back—discovering something new about herself and the world around her as she went. Gatewood, who would go on to hike the trail three times in total, once told reporters, "I thought it would be a nice lark." In our rush to always know exactly where we're going, perhaps we're missing out on the profound joy and discovery that comes from allowing ourselves, every now and then, to be gloriously, magnificently, unapologetically lost. ☺

Gatewood is pictured above on another walk from Independence, Missouri, to Portland, Oregon—at 71 years old.

CHANCE MEETINGS

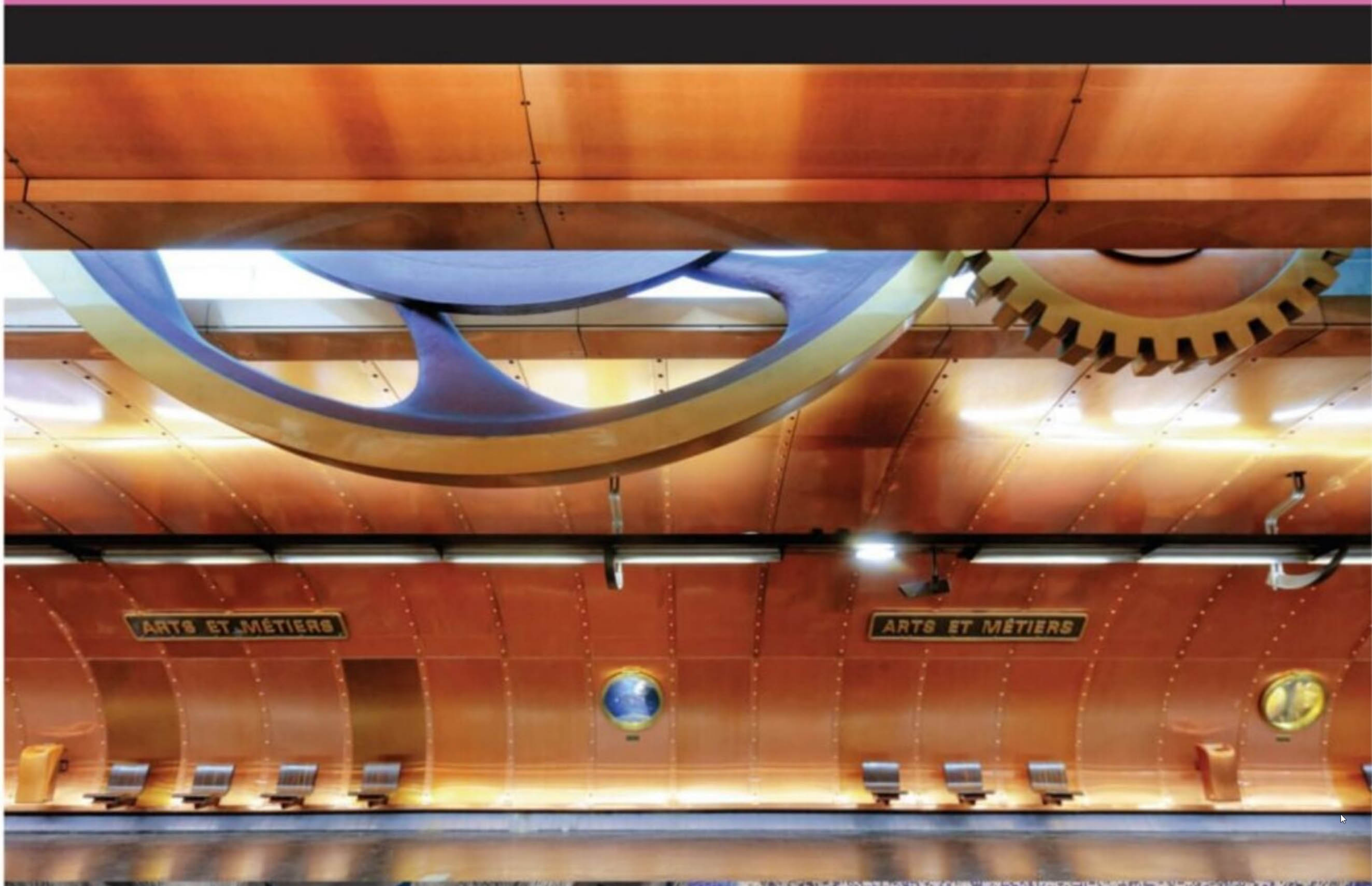


• **SOMETIMES THE** biggest moments in cultural history come down to pure chance and good timing. Take the rainy summer of 1816, when a young Mary Shelley arrived at Lake Geneva for what she thought would be just a vacation. Neither Mary nor her lover Percy had ever met Lord Byron before: The whole meeting had been orchestrated by Mary's stepsister Claire Clairmont, who had a complicated history with Byron. At the Villa Diodati, what started as an informal gathering turned into a ghost story writing contest that would birth two essential tales. While Shelley wrote what would become "Frankenstein," Byron's physician John Polidori wrote "The Vampyre," the first modern vampire story in English literature—predating Bram Stoker's "Dracula" by nearly 80 years and establishing the archetype of the sophisticated, aristocratic vampire that Stoker would later perfect.

Speaking of fateful meetings, in October of 1961, 18-year-old Mick Jagger was standing on platform 2 of Dartford Station, heading to the London School of Economics. Who should he run into but Keith Richards, a childhood pal he'd lost touch with; the two got talking about their shared love of blues music. This chance encounter on a train platform would eventually lead to the formation of The Rolling Stones.

The tech world has its own serendipitous meetings, too. In 1995, a young computer science student named Sergey Brin was assigned to show a prospective Stanford graduate student around campus. That visitor was Larry Page, and what could have been a routine campus tour turned into a spirited debate; the two reportedly disagreed about nearly everything. Their sparring sparked a partnership that would revolutionize how we use the internet. Within a few years, they'd created Google in a garage, transforming that chance meeting into a trillion-dollar company.

In 1896, Henry Ford was working as an engineer at the Edison Illuminating Company when he met Thomas Edison at a convention in Detroit. Edison's enthusiastic response to Ford's ideas about gasoline-powered vehicles gave the future automotive pioneer the confidence boost he needed. That conversation between two inventors helped start a revolution in transportation that would change the way people moved around the world.


ARTS ET MÉTIERS
ARTS ET MÉTIERS

Fun Facts

IN JAPAN, A CAT NAMED NITAMA SERVES AS A TRAIN STATION MASTER

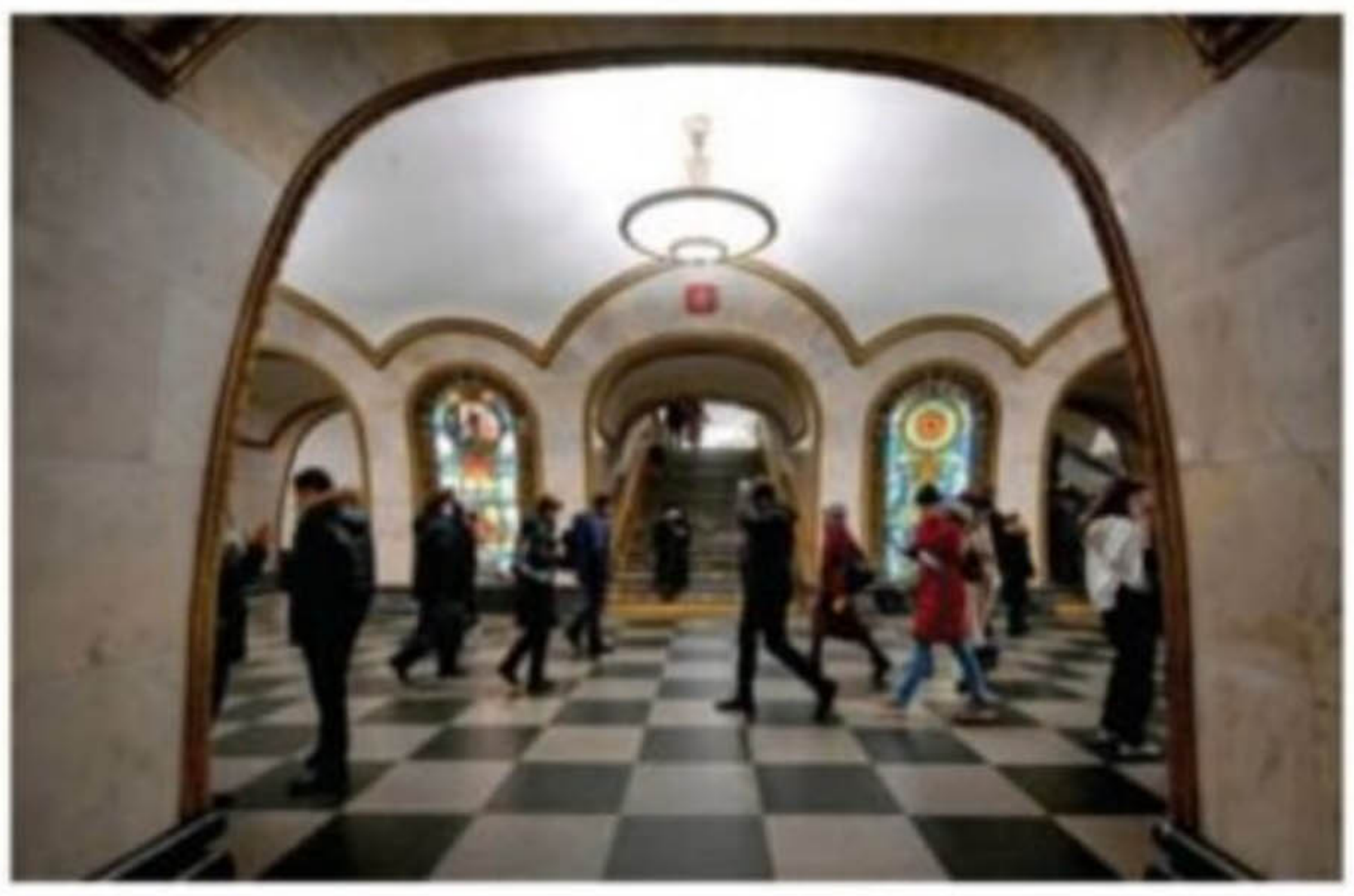
UNDERGROUND ART GALLERIES

TRANSPORTATION HUBS IN OUR LARGEST CITIES TREAT VISITORS TO SOME EYE-POPPING INSTALLATIONS

Deep beneath the streets of the world's busiest cities lies an unexpected cultural revolution. Stockholm's metro system has earned the title of "the world's longest art gallery," with over 90 of its 100 stations transformed into stunning art spaces. Since the 1950s, more than 150 artists have turned these utilitarian transport hubs into a sprawling canvas. The initiative began as a way to make public transportation more welcoming and to create moments of beauty in people's everyday routines. Artists saw these underground spaces not as constraints, but as opportunities to reach millions of people who might never step foot in a traditional gallery.

New York City's subway system tells its own story. Since 1985, the MTA Arts & Design program has added artwork to over 260 transit stations, turning daily commutes into cultural experiences. These aren't just random decorations—they're carefully curated installations that reflect each neighborhood's character. Take the Masstransiscope at the abandoned Myrtle Avenue station, which cleverly turns the subway into a giant zoetrope, creating an animated "moving picture" as trains pass by. In one of the system's new installations, artist Fred Tomaselli has created a 680-square-foot bird-inspired mosaic at Manhattan's 14th Street station, adding another layer to the city's underground landscape. "There are very few things that you can bring into an infrastructure environment that has the impact art does," said artist Sandra Bloodworth, former director of MTA Arts & Design, in an interview with Bloomberg. "Art transforms the journey and engages us with our city. The value is immeasurable."

> "ART TRANSFORMS THE JOURNEY AND ENGAGES US WITH OUR CITY. THE VALUE IS IMMEASURABLE."



The Moscow Metro system showcases a different approach to underground art. The Novoslobodskaya station (above) features 32 stained-glass murals, each one telling its own story through vibrant colors and intricate designs. Meanwhile, in Naples, Italy, the Toledo Station has earned international recognition for its dramatic light installations and sea-themed mosaics that transform the space into an immersive underwater experience. "It isn't a museum in the sense of a repository of art," Achille Bonito Oliva, the artistic coordinator of the project, explained in *The New York Times*. "There's a thread running through it," he said, "an underground aesthetic of the contemporary, bearing witness to our time."

This global movement of underground art continues to expand. In Norway's 15-mile-long Lærdal road tunnel, the longest in the world, light art alleviates claustrophobia and tiredness, while Paris's Arts et Metiers station pays homage to science fiction with copper-plated walls and a steampunk aesthetic. These installations beautify the space—and turn mundane commutes into daily encounters with art, proving that galleries don't need white walls or admission tickets to make an impact.

The images here are from Paris (top of page 66), Stockholm (bottom left of page 66), Naples (bottom right of page 66), and Moscow (above).

Fun Facts

IT'S ESTIMATED THAT BETWEEN 200-500 MILLION PEOPLE REGULARLY MEDITATE

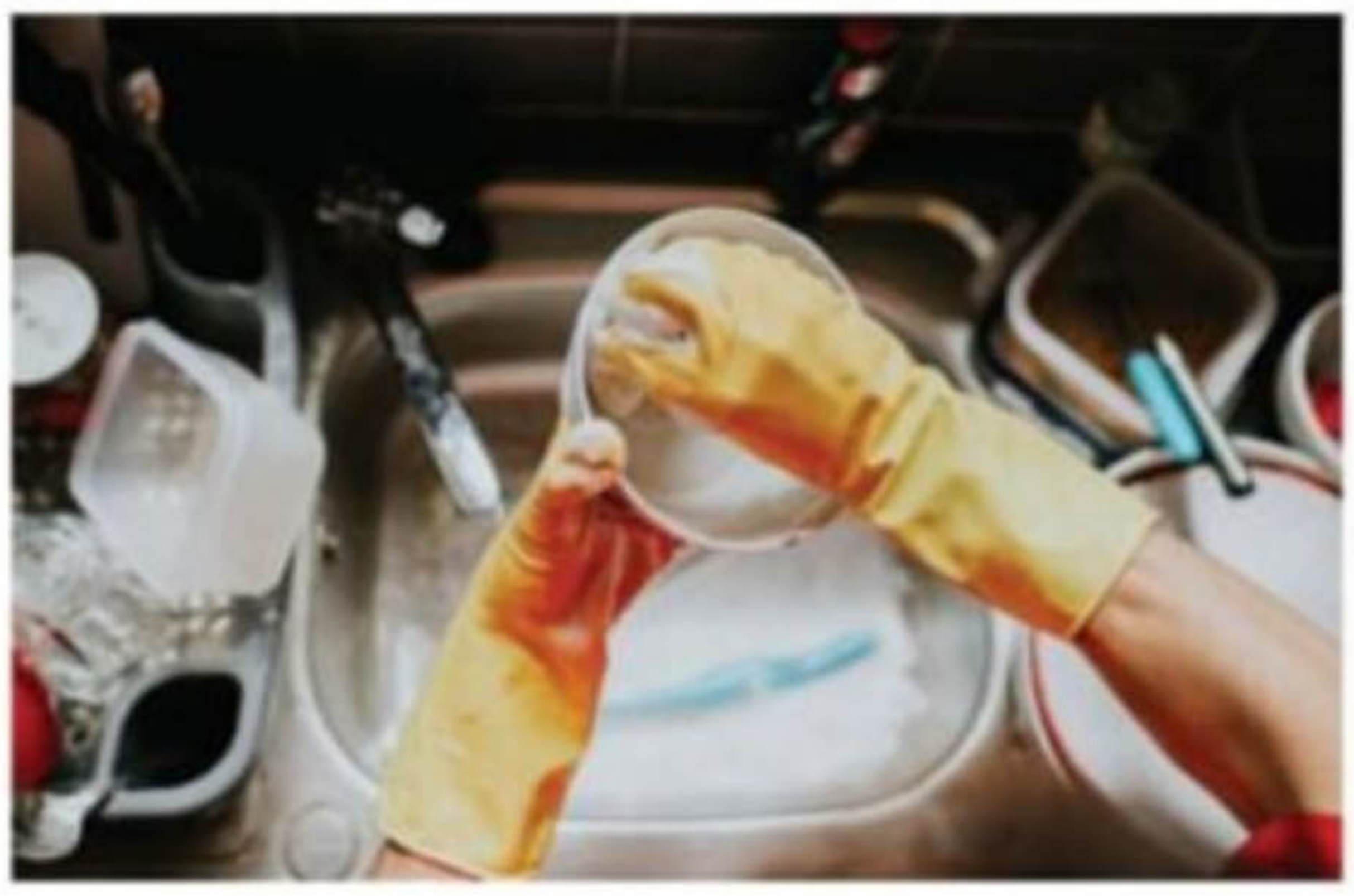
MEDITATION IN MOTION

USING MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUES DURING YOUR DAILY ROUTINE CAN REAP BIG BENEFITS

The simple act of walking down your driveway or washing a stack of dishes might be more powerful than you think. Research from the National Institutes of Health shows that turning everyday movements into mindful practices can lower blood pressure and significantly reduce anxiety and depression. It's a phenomenon scientists call "meditation in motion," and it's changing how we think about both exercise and mindfulness. "It's like being able to sit on the riverbank and watch thoughts floating by like leaves on a stream," explained Sona Dimidjian, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of Colorado at Boulder, in the NIH's News in Health newsletter. "Developing the skill of mindfulness can help stop you from being pulled into any one thought and carried down the stream."

What makes movement meditation so effective is its impact on our brain chemistry. When we combine mindful awareness with physical movement, our brains actually change, improving our working memory and enhancing cognitive function. Even more fascinating, regular mindful movement practice has been shown to actually affect neurotransmitter systems, creating lasting changes in how our brains process stress and emotion.

The beauty of movement meditation lies in its accessibility. Unlike traditional meditation, which often requires setting aside dedicated quiet time, mindful movement can be incorporated into activities we're already doing. Studies indicate that engaging your senses during outdoor activities is especially beneficial, suggesting that the key isn't what you're doing, but how you're doing it. Whether you're sweeping the



floor or taking a stroll, bringing your full attention to the physical sensations can transform routine activities into opportunities for mental wellness.

Recent findings have revealed just how little time it takes to reap these benefits. A groundbreaking study from the University of Southampton discovered that just 10 minutes of mindful activity daily can boost overall well-being and combat depression. This research suggests that the threshold for positive change is lower than previously thought, making movement meditation an accessible tool for anyone looking to enhance their mental and physical health, regardless of their schedule or fitness level.

Rather than aiming for lengthy sessions, focus on trying to work in regular, brief periods of mindful movement throughout your day. Start by choosing one daily activity—perhaps your morning walk or evening dishwashing routine—and practice bringing your full attention to the physical sensations, from the rhythm of your movements to the feeling of air or water on your skin. Scientists have found that engaging multiple senses enhances the practice's effectiveness, so notice sounds, smells, and visual details as you move through your chosen activity. "If you start doing it little by little each day, mindfulness becomes a habit, something that encourages joy and ease—a moment to pause throughout the day," explains Nkenji Clarke, Ph.D., in an interview with the National Board for Certified Counselors. "The ability to get creative with mindfulness activities is also a benefit. We need to use creativity in a positive way; why not use it for mindfulness?"

To maximize the benefits, research indicates that consistency matters more than duration.

MINDFUL MOMENTS

- **WANT TO** boost your mood in five minutes flat? Try this: Stop whatever you're doing and focus on your feet. (Yes, your feet.) Feel where they press against your shoes or the floor. Wiggle your toes. This deceptively simple exercise, known as grounding, actually triggers your brain's relaxation response by shifting attention away from stress-inducing thoughts. Another quick mood-lifting exercise is the 4-7-8 breath: Inhale quietly through your nose for four counts, hold your breath for seven, then exhale completely through your mouth for eight counts. This pattern activates your parasympathetic nervous system, naturally calming your body and mind.

For a joy boost that lasts longer, practice "savoring": the art of mindfully focusing on positive experiences. Next time you're sipping your morning coffee, devote 30 seconds to really experiencing it; notice the warmth of the mug in your hands, inhale the aroma, and pay attention to the flavor as it hits your tongue. Or try the "5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique" during your daily routine: Name five things you can see, four things you can touch, three things you can hear, two things you can smell, and one thing you can taste. This exercise, backed by cognitive research, helps anchor you in the present moment and increases activity in brain regions associated with pleasure and well-being.

THE BEAUTY IN BROKENNESS

AN ANCIENT PRACTICE OF REPAIRING BROKEN POTTERY IS NOW MORE MEANINGFUL THAN EVER

Picture this: It's 15th-century Japan, and a powerful shogun has just received his precious Chinese tea bowl back from repairs, only to find it clumsily put back together. Not exactly what he had in mind. This disappointment would spark something remarkable: the birth of kintsugi, which literally means "to join with gold," a technique where broken ceramics are repaired using a specific lacquer mixed with precious metals like gold or silver. Far from merely a repair method, it's an art form that would go on to capture imaginations worldwide.

You might think fixing broken pottery with gold sounds extravagant, but there's something deeper at work here. Kintsugi is intimately tied to a Japanese philosophy called wabi-sabi. This isn't just about making things pretty: It's a whole worldview centered on accepting transience and imperfection. And it's no simple craft. Master artisans spend years training in urushi lacquerware, working with natural lacquer carefully harvested from the sap of the urushi tree.

Fast forward to today, and kintsugi has taken on a life of its own. The practice has exploded globally, catching the eye of contemporary artists, designers, and even mental health professionals. It's not hard to see why: We all have something precious that's been broken or damaged, and there's something deeply compelling about the idea of turning those disheartening breaks into something beautiful rather than hiding them. "The philosophy of kintsugi, as an approach to life, can help encourage us when we face failure," wrote Ella Tennant, English language teaching fellow at Keele University, in an article for The Conversation. "We can try to pick up the pieces, and if we manage to do that we can put them back together."

The ripples of kintsugi's influence keep spreading, touching everything from fashion runways to therapy offices. Researchers, including cultural geographers and psychologists, have started studying how this ancient practice connects to modern ideas about healing and resilience. "If you're dealing with fractures of your own life, as you're doing kitsugi, it can remind you of your own fractures," explained artist Makoto Fujimura, author of *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making*, in an interview with the Trinity Forum. "And if you learn to behold that without trying to fix it, that is an entry into a new creation, new healing." Instead of trying to hide our scars, kintsugi suggests we might be better off turning them into gold. It's a centuries-old message that somehow feels more relevant than ever—maybe because in our era of filtered photos and carefully curated social media lives, we're all finally ready to embrace something more authentic, more human, and yes, more beautifully imperfect.

Kintsugi is often associated with the ceramics used for Japanese tea ceremonies, called "chanoyu."

WHEN THE WORLD CAME TOGETHER

20 INSPIRING MOMENTS OF GLOBAL UNITY

In a world that can sometimes feel hopelessly divided, there are also extraordinary moments when humanity shows its true colors: moments when people from different corners of the globe unite for a common cause. Here are 20 remarkable instances that remind us of our shared humanity and what we can achieve when we work together.

1. The Great Ethiopian Green Legacy

In July 2019, Ethiopia achieved an unprecedented environmental milestone by planting over 350 million trees in a single day. Citizens from across the nation, including schoolchildren and government officials, collaborated to combat deforestation and climate change, creating a powerful global model of collective ecological action.

2. Thai Cave Rescue

In 2018, an international team of cave divers, military personnel, and volunteers from 17 countries worked tirelessly to rescue 12 youth soccer players and their coach from a cave that flooded in Thailand. The 18-day rescue operation showcased humanity's determination, expertise, and selflessness, ultimately leading to all 13 people being saved against seemingly impossible odds.

3. The 9/11 Boat Lift

On September 11, 2001, amid one of America's darkest days, ordinary boat operators carried out the largest maritime evacuation in history. In just nine hours, about 150 vessels transported nearly half a million people out of Manhattan. Boat captains and crews from all over the New York harbor answered the call without hesitation. Tom Hanks later narrated a documentary called *Boatlift* that told this remarkable story of spontaneous heroism.

4. The International Space Station

Since 1998, the International Space Station has been a shining example of global cooperation. Astronauts from 19 different countries have lived and worked together in space, conducting groundbreaking research while proving that politics and national boundaries mean little when viewed from 250 miles above Earth.

5. The Indian Ocean Tsunami Response

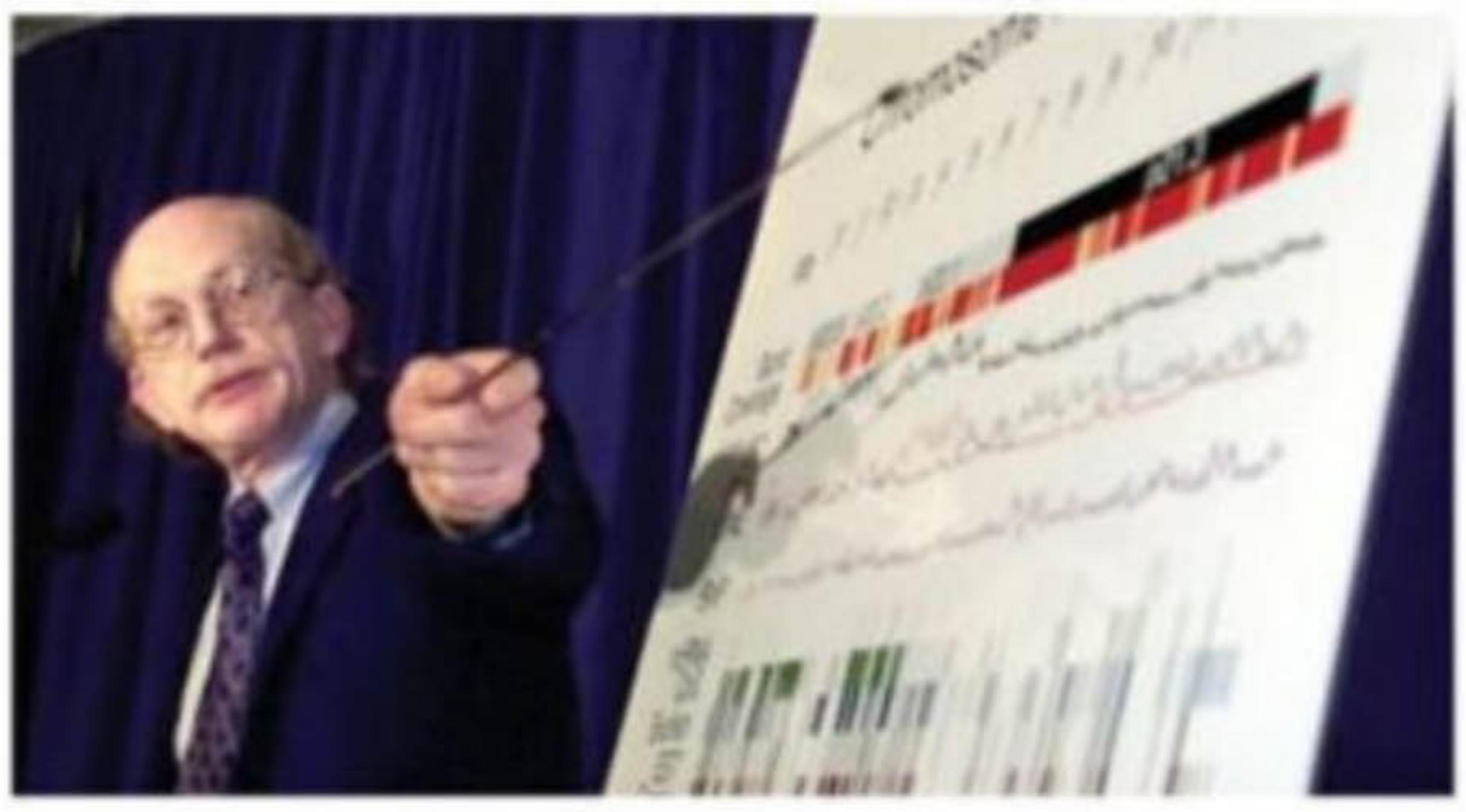
Following the devastating 2004 tsunami, the world witnessed an unprecedented wave of international aid. People from 28 countries contributed to the largest humanitarian response in history, raising over $14 billion in aid and sending thousands of volunteers to help affected regions rebuild.

6. **The Montreal Protocol**

In 1987, every UN member state ratified the Montreal Protocol, agreeing to phase out ozone-depleting substances. This marked the first time in history that every country united to address an environmental challenge. "The Montreal protocol is a model of cooperation," then-President Ronald Reagan said in a statement. "The protocol is the result of an extraordinary process of scientific study, negotiations among representatives of the business and environmental communities, and international diplomacy. It is a monumental achievement."

7. **The Great Pacific Garbage Patch Cleanup**

In 2018, The Ocean Cleanup project launched with support from 17 countries. This innovative effort to clean up ocean plastic pollution has united scientists, engineers, and volunteers from around the world. The project has already removed over 100,000 kilograms of plastic from our oceans.



8. **The Human Genome Project**

This 13-year project, completed in 2003, involved scientists from six countries working together to map the human genome. This collaboration has revolutionized medicine and our understanding of human biology, leading to countless medical breakthroughs.

9. **Live Aid Concert**

On July 13, 1985, the Live Aid concert became a global phenomenon, uniting musicians and audiences across continents to fight famine in Ethiopia. At Wembley Stadium in London and JFK Stadium in Philadelphia, over 150,000 people danced and sang together, while an estimated 1.9 billion people watched worldwide. As Freddie Mercury led the crowd in a call-and-response during Queen's historic performance, the entire stadium moved as one, creating what many consider one of music's most powerful moments of unity. The event raised over $127 million.

Fun Facts

THE CONCERT AIMED TO RAISE AWARENESS AND FUNDS TO FIGHT ETHIOPIAN FAMINE

U2 frontman Bono appeals to the massive crowd at Live Aid in 1985 (above).

OVER 150,000 PEOPLE DANCED AND SANG TOGETHER WHILE AN ESTIMATED 1.9 BILLION PEOPLE WATCHED WORLDWIDE.

10. **The Antarctic Treaty**

In 1959, 12 countries set aside their territorial claims to preserve Antarctica for peaceful scientific study. Today, 54 nations adhere to this treaty, making the continent a remarkable example of international cooperation and environmental protection.

11. **Nepal Earthquake Response**

After a devastating 2015 earthquake, 134 international search and resuce teams from 34 countries worked side by side to provide life-saving assistance. The international community raised over $4 billion in aid, demonstrating global solidarity in crisis. "I really think God has given me a second chance to live," said earthquake survivor Bambie Panta in an interview with the Global Peace Foundation. "I have to make use of my life, for the purpose of my life, to make use of it properly and try to help people as much as I can. So I try to reach out and help people

who are in need. Also seeing people coming as well from other countries, and trying to help us, has inspired us all."

12. India's Green Revolution

In 2016, over 800,000 volunteers in Uttar Pradesh, India, planted 50 million trees in just 24 hours. This remarkable feat was part of the country's ambitious effort to increase forest cover and combat climate change, demonstrating the power of collective environmental action.

13. The Chilean Mine Rescue

In 2010, when 33 miners were trapped 2,300 feet underground in Chile, the world sprang into action. NASA provided medical expertise and helped design the rescue capsule, while experts from a dozen different countries contributed knowledge and equipment. After 69 days underground, all the miners were rescued.

FIREFIGHTERS FROM THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, AND NEW ZEALAND FLEW ACROSS THE WORLD TO HELP AUSTRALIA.

14. Haiti Earthquake Response

Following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the world responded with one of the largest relief efforts in history. Over 140 countries provided aid, sending rescue teams, medical personnel, and supplies. Ordinary citizens worldwide donated over $13 billion to support recovery efforts.

15. Team Trees Initiative

In 2019, the Team Trees project united hundreds of thousands of people online to plant 20 million trees. The initiative, started by YouTubers, received donations from over 800,000 unique donors in 200 countries, showing how digital communities can create real-world environmental impact.

16. COVID-19 Vaccine Development

The development of COVID-19 vaccines in 2020 marked an unprecedented collaboration between scientists, researchers, and pharmaceutical companies worldwide. This effort compressed what typically takes five to 10 years into less than one year, demonstrating the power of global scientific cooperation.

17. Unified Korean Olympic Team

At the 2018 Winter Olympics, North and South Korea marched under a unified flag and fielded a joint women's ice hockey team for the first time. This powerful moment of reconciliation showed how sport can transcend political divisions and bring people together.

18. The Great Whale Rescue

In 2019, dozens of volunteers worked together to

save a pod of pilot whales stranded on a beach on St. Simons Island's East Beach in Georgia. "As we arrived at the beach, we noticed a group of people in the water. At first we thought they had dolphins doing some sort of show," eyewitness Dixie McCoy told CNN. "As we got closer, we couldn't believe what we saw." She continued: "It was so sad to see so many whales on the beach. Everyone was trying so hard to get them back in the water." The rescue operation lasted several hours and successfully returned all but two of the whales to deeper waters.

19. The Amazon Conservation Alliance

In 2019, seven South American countries signed a pact to protect the Amazon rainforest. This historic agreement united nations in preserving Earth's largest rainforest, demonstrating how neighboring countries can work together to protect shared natural resources.

20. International Aid for Australian Bushfires

During the 2019-2020 Australian bushfires, firefighters from the United States, Canada, and New Zealand flew across the world to help their Australian counterparts. This international brigade, along with worldwide donations and support, helped Australia face one of its worst natural disasters. 🙂

YOUTH AND SENIOR CONNECTION PROGRAMS

• **IMAGINE A** high school student sitting with a senior citizen, both laughing and enjoying their time with one another as they piece together stories from decades past. That's the magic of the Youth + Senior Connections Program, which brings together senior citizens and student volunteers from local schools through WriteMyLifeBook's innovative platform. This mutual mentorship program puts seniors in the role of life mentors, creating connections that bridge generations. Students help document their elder partners' life stories, preserving precious memories while learning invaluable life lessons that you just can't get from a textbook.

But that's just the beginning of how young and old are coming together. Generation Connect has created a whole new spin on tech support, connecting local high schoolers with older adults for everything from basic tech help to online gaming sessions. It's not just about fixing Wi-Fi problems or explaining smartphone features; these sessions often turn into genuine friendships built on common interests and shared laughter. These kinds of programs foster relationships, creativity, and empowerment while giving young people a chance to develop patience, empathy, and communication skills that will serve them well throughout their lives.

Riddles, JOKES, AND SMALL Joys

GET READY TO EXERCISE YOUR MIND—AND SHARE PLENTY OF SMILES

Remember the last time you cracked a riddle that had been nagging at your brain for days? That sweet "aha!" moment probably sparked the same kind of joy you feel when landing a perfectly timed joke or mastering a tricky puzzle. These little victories are part of humanity's age-old love affair with playful problem-solving, from ancient Egyptian riddles carved in tomb walls to that groan-worthy pun you just shared in the office group chat.

Welcome to a celebration of life's lighter side, where we'll unravel everything from the surprisingly scientific benefits of writing in your morning gratitude journal to the mysterious world of unsolved ciphers that still baffle codebreakers today. We'll explore why laughing clubs are popping up in parks across the globe, discover which animals might be nature's best comedians, and yes, we'll even defend the noble art of dad jokes. So prepare your puzzle-solving mind and get ready to exercise both your brain cells and your smile muscles.

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A
B

HEAD-SCRATCHING RIDDLES

CONCENTRATE HARD...THEN GRIN, BURST OUT LAUGHING, OR ROLL YOUR EYES

Ever notice how your brain feels a bit like it's doing mental jumping jacks when you're solving a good riddle? That's because riddles are like tiny puzzles that force us to think sideways, upside down, and sometimes inside out. Remember, the joy of riddles isn't just in getting the right answer—it's in the mental journey you take to get there. Some might make you laugh, others might make you groan, but each one exercises your brain in a unique way. Keep these handy for your next family gathering or friend meetup, and watch as people's faces light up with that special "Ah, I got it!" glow.

How to Tackle a Riddle Like a Pro

Before we jump into the brain teasers, here's a quick guide to becoming a riddle-solving master:

1. **Read carefully:** Every word counts in a riddle. Sometimes the answer is hiding in plain sight, wrapped in clever wordplay.

2. **Think metaphorically:** Many riddles use figurative language. If something seems impossible literally, try thinking about it symbolically.

3. **Look for patterns:** Notice repeated words or themes—they might be clues.

4. **Say it out loud:** Sometimes hearing the riddle helps you catch wordplay you might miss when just reading it silently.

5. **Don't overthink it:** While some riddles are complex, many have surprisingly simple answers.

EASY PEASY

These riddles are perfect for warming up your mental muscles:

1. I have cities, but no houses.
I have mountains, but no trees.
I have water, but no fish.
I have roads, but no cars.
What am I?

2. What has keys but no locks, space but no room, and you can enter but not go in?

3. The more you take away from me,
The larger I become. What am I?

4. What gets wet while drying?

5. What has legs but doesn't walk?

6. I'm tall when I'm young,
And short when I'm old.
What am I?

MEDIUM MYSTERIES

Now let's kick things up a notch:

7. I am not alive, but I grow;
I don't have lungs, but I need air;
I don't have a mouth, but water kills me.
What am I?

8. What breaks yet never falls,
And what falls yet never breaks?

9. The person who makes it, sells it.
The person who buys it never uses it.
The person who uses it doesn't know they're using it. What is it?

10. Forward I am heavy, Backward I am not. What am I?

11. What can travel around the world while staying in a corner?

12. I am taken from a mine and shut up in a wooden case,
From which I am never released, and yet I am used by everyone.
What am I?

HARD HEAD-SCRATCHERS

These brain-benders will challenge even the most seasoned riddle enthusiasts:

13. What is always in front of you but can't be seen?

14. We hurt without moving.
We poison without touching.
We bear the truth and the lies.
We are not to be judged by our size.
What are we?

15. I have billions of eyes,
Yet I live in darkness.
I have millions of ears,
Yet only four lobes.
I have no muscle,
Yet I rule two hemispheres.
What am I?

16. If you break me,
I do not stop working.
If you touch me,
I may be snared.
If you lose me,
Nothing will matter.
What am I?

17. What is so fragile that saying its name breaks it?

18. I am a box that holds keys without locks,
Yet they dance when opened.
What am I?

19. The one who makes it, tells it not.
The one who takes it, knows it not.
The one who knows it, wants it not.
What is it?

20. What has an eye but cannot see?
(Can you get both answers to this one?)

See the answers on page 94.

Fun Facts

WORLD LAUGHTER DAY IS CELEBRATED ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF MAY EACH YEAR

THE LAUGHTER CLUB MOVEMENT

HOW A LIGHTHEARTED MEETUP IN A PARK STARTED A JOYFUL, HEALTH-FOCUSED REVOLUTION

One morning in March 1995, in a public park in Mumbai, five people started something extraordinary. A local doctor named Madan Kataria convinced four other early birds to try something that must have seemed pretty strange at the time: Gather in a circle and laugh together. It was the world's first laughter club, and while they probably had no idea at the time, they were starting something that would spread to thousands of clubs across more than 100 countries.

At first, they just shared jokes. But you can imagine what happened: They ran out of good ones pretty quickly. That's when Dr. Kataria and his wife Madhuri had their lightbulb moment: They realized our bodies don't really care whether we're laughing at a joke or just laughing for the sake of it—the benefits are the same either way. So they created a unique blend of yogic breathing (pranayama) and playful laughter exercises. No humor required—just a willingness to laugh for absolutely no reason at all. They called it Hasya Yoga, or Laughter Yoga, and soon it was transforming morning routines in parks all over the world.

There's solid science backing up these gatherings. Research shows that laughter yoga sessions decrease stress hormones and boost our feel-good chemicals. "Laughter has the ability to change our mood within minutes by releasing happy hormones, endorphins, and so you feel good," Dr. Kataria said in an interview published in the journal *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*. "Mood has the greatest impact on mental health.… Patients with anxiety tend to breathe very shallowly, yet laughter is all about deep belly breathing and belly laughing, using your diaphragm and abs, which helps people suffering from anxiety."

START YOUR DAY WITH A SMILE

• **BEGINNING YOUR** day with intention can literally rewire your brain for happiness. Research shows that morning rituals trigger the release of dopamine and serotonin—those feel-good chemicals that boost your mood. Something as simple as stepping outside for two minutes of morning sunlight or sipping your coffee in complete silence before the day begins can lower cortisol levels (that's the stress hormone) and set a positive tone for the hours ahead. Even a 10-minute morning stretch or gentle movement practice has been shown to boost mood and mental clarity by increasing blood flow and releasing endorphins, and you don't need any special equipment or skills to reap these benefits.

One of the most powerful morning practices backed by science is gratitude journaling. Multiple experts claim that people who use the "Three Good Things" technique—write down three specific things you're thankful for each morning—experience better sleep quality, reduced anxiety, and even improved immune function. The key to this is consistency: Spending just five minutes each morning putting pen to paper can create lasting changes in your brain's neural pathways, making it easier to spot the good in your daily life. It's not about writing profound essays—simple observations like "my child's laugh" or "the taste of my breakfast" are enough to trigger these benefits.

In a typical session, people stand in a circle, make eye contact, and try different types of laughs: There's the "lion laugh" where you stick your tongue out, and the "milkshake laugh" where you pretend to mix and drink a shake. Between laughs, everyone practices deep breathing to get oxygen flowing. And here's the thing: Even if people start with forced laughter, it usually turns into the real thing once everyone loosens up.

These days, laughter clubs have popped up in some surprising places. You'll find them in corporate offices, cancer treatment centers, retirement homes, and university campuses. Medical journals have published studies showing how the practice helps reduce anxiety, improve sleep, and even lower blood pressure temporarily. For example, a study published in the journal *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice* found that "significant differences were found in the effectiveness of laughter yoga on physical function (blood pressure, cortisol level, sleep quality) and psychosocial health (life satisfaction, quality of life, loneliness, death anxiety, depression, mood, happiness) in older adults." Perhaps the most interesting finding is that you get these benefits whether your laughter is genuine or not, proving Dr. Kataria was onto something big. The movement has become especially valuable for older adults and people dealing with chronic stress, offering a simple, free way to boost both physical and mental health.

THEY OFFER A SIMPLE, FREE WAY TO BOOST PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH.

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Laughter Club Internati

In 1998, over 12,000 people attended the first World Laughter Day celebration in Mumbai.

Fun Facts

BABY ELEPHANTS SUCK THEIR TRUNKS, JUST LIKE HUMAN BABIES SUCK THUMBS

THE BEST DAD JOKES EVER TOLD

GET READY TO GROAN—AND WRITE THESE DOWN TO TELL AT THE NEXT FAMILY GATHERING

Dad jokes are like that worn-out armchair in your father's living room: They're comfortable, familiar, and somehow manage to stick around despite everyone's protests. These groan-worthy puns and eye-roll-inducing one-liners are the bread and butter of fatherly humor worldwide. They're so bad, they're good—and that's precisely what makes them perfect.

"Normally when someone shifts to the humorous mode of discourse, which is typically signaled through a shift in tone or the use of discursive markers (e.g. 'have you heard the one about…'), this is because they have something genuinely funny to say," wrote Ph.D. student Marc Hye-Knudsen, a humor researcher at Denmark's Aarhus University, in an article for the British Psychological Society. "Dad jokes flagrantly violate this norm by following up this shift with a thoroughly tame pun. A dad joke can thus be so stupid, so lame, so unfunny that this paradoxically makes it funny. In this sense, dad jokes can be considered a type of 'anti-humor'—humor derived from violating the norms of humor production itself. Are dad jokes, then, funny or unfunny? The answer to that question can only be: Yes."

So, brace yourself for this collection of classic dad jokes that'll make you laugh, groan—or probably both at the same time. Fair warning: these are best served with a side of exaggerated winks and enthusiastic finger guns.

1. What did the buffalo say to his son when he left for college? Bison!

2. Why don't eggs tell jokes? They'd crack up!

3. I used to be addicted to soap, but I'm clean now.

4. What does a cloud wear under its raincoat? Thunderwear!

5. What do you call a fake noodle? An impasta!

6. My wife asked me to stop singing "Wonderwall" to her. I said "maybe..."

7. Why did the scarecrow win an award? Because he was outstanding in his field!

8. What do you call a bear with no teeth? A gummy bear!

9. Did you hear about the claustrophobic astronaut? He just needed a little space.

10. Why don't melons get married? They cantaloupe!

11. What did the grape say when it got stepped on? Nothing, it just let out a little wine!

12. What's brown and sticky? A stick!

13. I'm terrified of elevators, so I'm taking steps to avoid them.

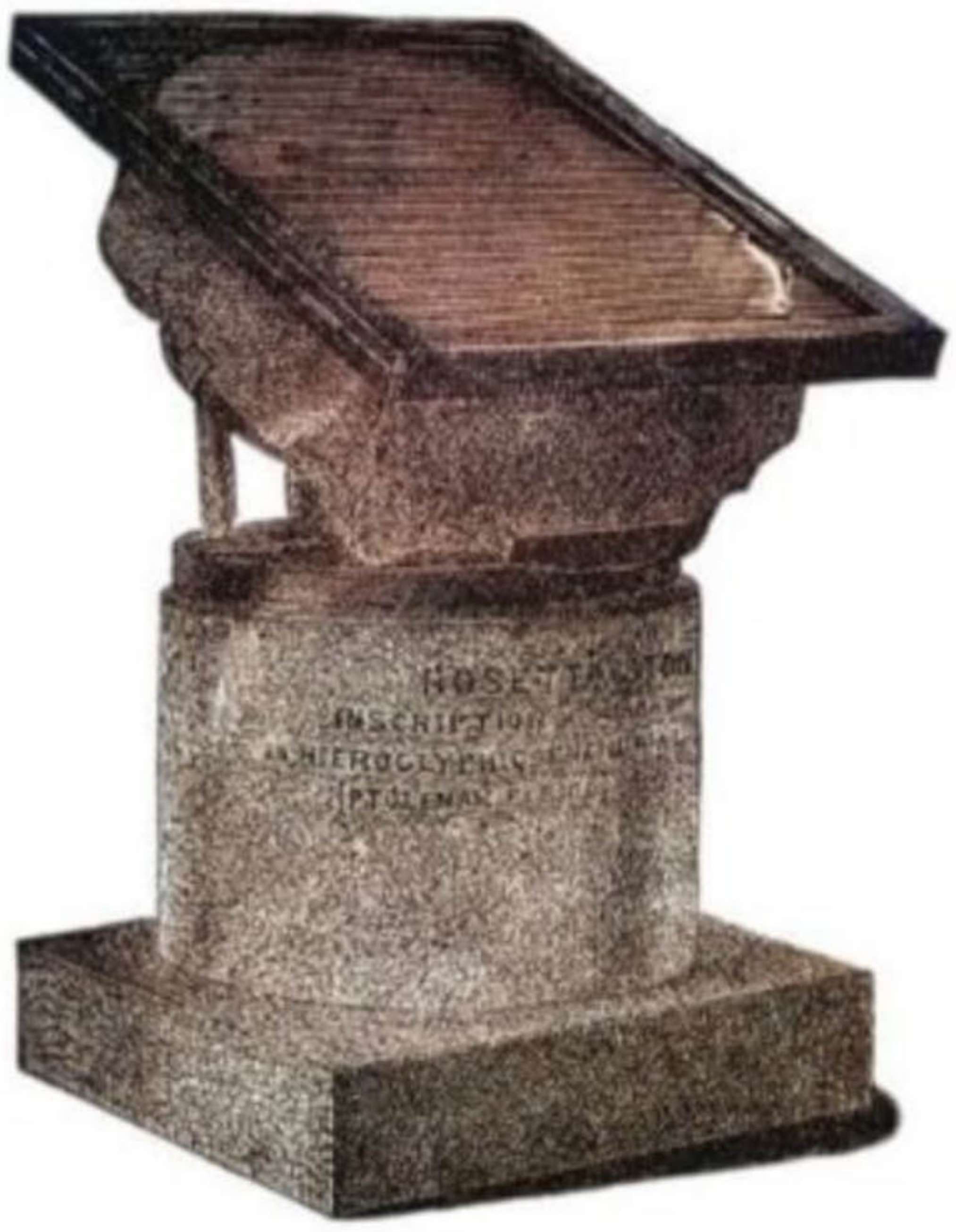
14. What do you call a pig that does karate? A pork chop!

15. Why did the math book look so sad? Because it had too many problems!

16. My wife is really mad at the fact that I have no sense of direction. So I packed up my stuff and right!

17. What do you call a fish wearing a bowtie? So-fish-ticated!

Remember, the true power of a dad joke lies not in the punchline, but in the delivery. For maximum effect, make sure to pause dramatically before the punchline and maintain unwavering eye contact with your audience. And if nobody laughs? Well, that just means it's working exactly as intended.



HISTORICAL CIPHERS

INTRIGUING SECRETS, SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE CODES, AND THE PEOPLE WHO CRACKED THEM

From Renaissance Venice to Victorian England to the disco era, the stories behind history's coded messages read like detective novels, offering glimpses into the brilliant minds of both code makers and code breakers.

The Key That Unlocked Egypt

The first major breakthrough came with the Rosetta Stone—a granite slab discovered in 1799 bearing the same text in three scripts: ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, Demotic script, and ancient Greek. By studying the same text in a known language (Greek) alongside the unknown hieroglyphs, Jean-François Champollion was able to create an alphabet of phonetic hieroglyphs, ultimately revealing the first comprehensible translation of Egyptian hieroglyphs and unlocking centuries of Egyptian history.

The Rosetta Stone has been displayed at The British Museum in London, England since 1802—only three years after its discovery.

Fun Facts

THE ROSETTA STONE WEIGHS APPROXIMATELY 1,680 POUNDS

Venice's First Spy Master

Giovanni Soro, a name largely forgotten by history, served as Venice's first official cipher secretary from 1505 to 1543. His greatest achievement was cracking a complex diplomatic code used by the Ottoman Empire, revealing military secrets that helped Venice maintain its maritime dominance. Working for the Council of Ten—Venice's powerful and secretive governing body that controlled state security and intelligence—Soro established the world's first professional codebreaking service, setting the foundation for centuries of government cryptography to come.

Encrypted Immortality

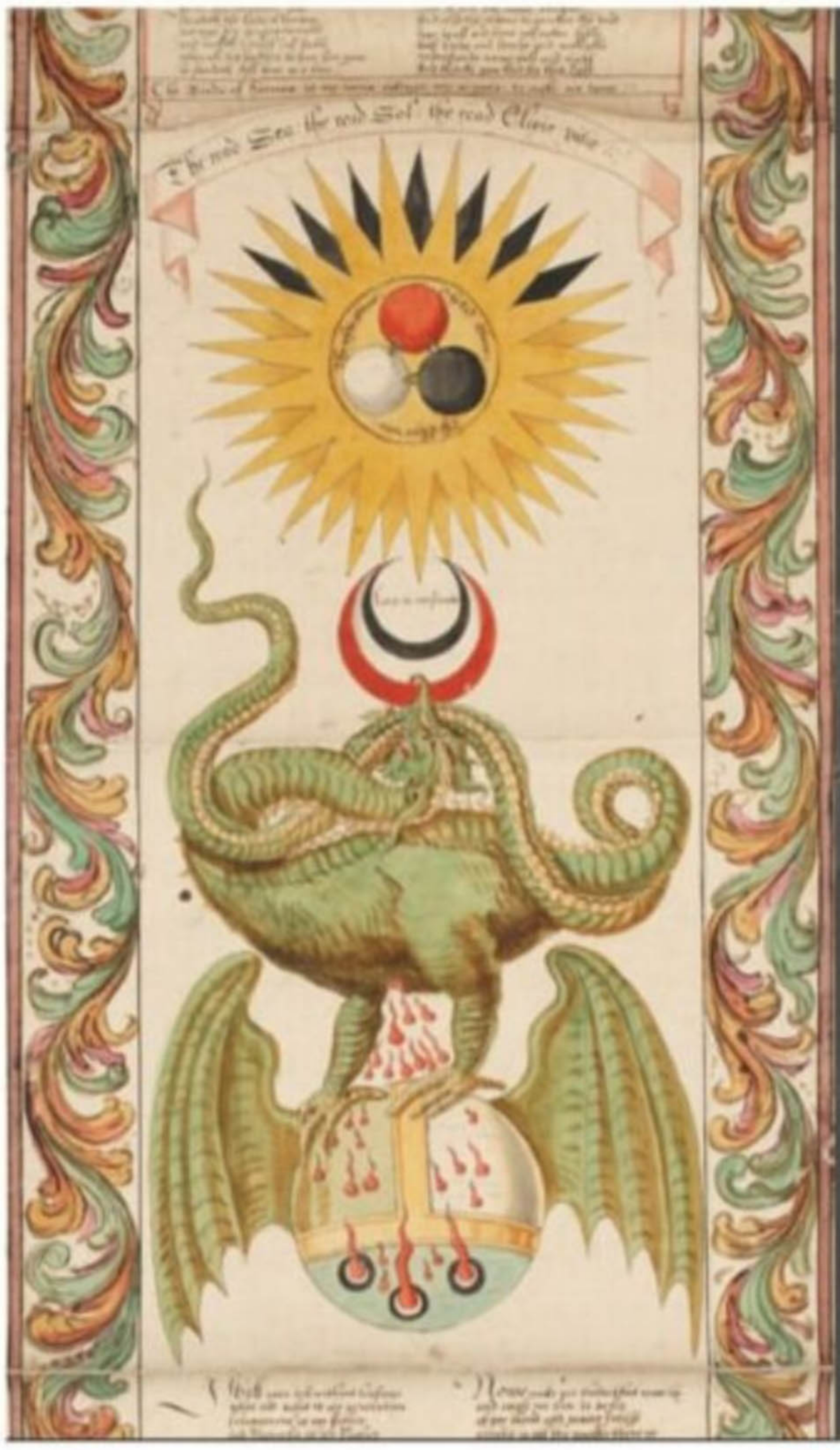
The searches for eternal life and manmade gold produced some of history's most intricate puzzles. Alchemists spent centuries pursuing the Philosopher's Stone, leaving behind encrypted recipes and coded manuscripts that continue to fascinate scholars. These recipes included complex mixtures of metals like mercury, sulfur, and salt, and sometimes organic substances like blood and hair. The Ripley Scroll stands among the most famous, created in the 15th century with elaborate symbolic illustrations and encrypted instructions. While the recipes contained chemical processes that could be studied in modern laboratories, no one ever succeeded in actually creating the substance that could turn base metals into gold. When the code was finally broken, it revealed complex alchemical transformations that, while never achieving the dream of transmutation, did lay the groundwork for modern chemistry.

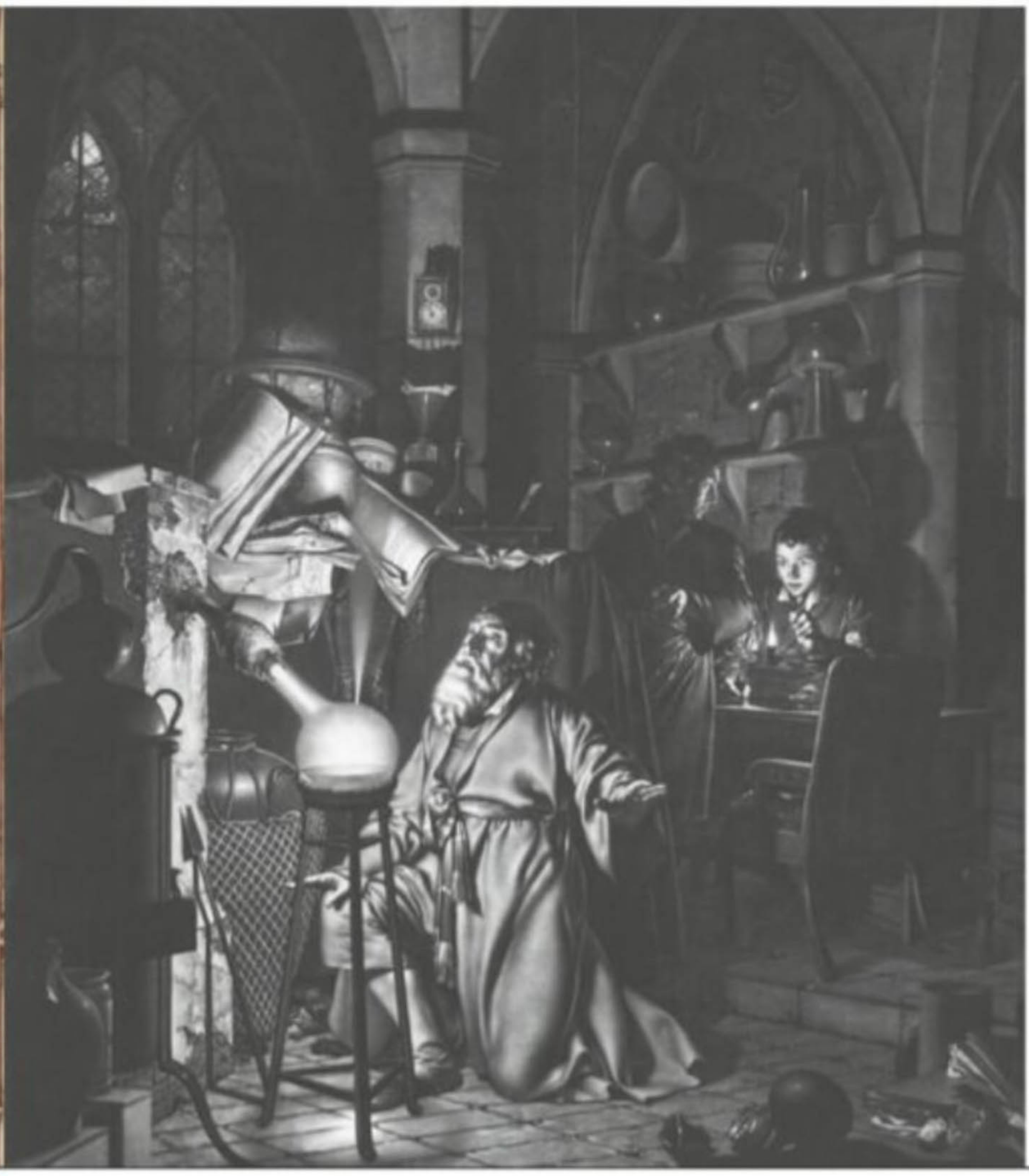
THIS BREAKTHROUGH REVEALED KING CHARLES I'S SECRET PLANS...

The Mathematical Mastermind

During England's Civil War, mathematical genius John Wallis emerged as Parliament's chief cryptographer. His finest achievement came in 1642 when he cracked an extraordinarily complex

The alchemist pictured in the painting below accidentally discovered phosphorus, leading to the development of chemistry as a modern science.





Royalist cipher filled with numbers and symbols. This breakthrough revealed King Charles I's secret plans and helped turn the tide of the war. Wallis continued his work for decades, serving as a one-man Parliamentary Bletchley Park centuries before WWII made code-breaking famous.

Peter Rabbit's Creator and Her Secret Code

Even Beatrix Potter, renowned creator of Peter Rabbit, led a secret life as a code writer. Between the ages of 15 and 30, she maintained a diary written in a clever mono-alphabetic substitution cipher. The journal contained 200,000 words of encrypted text. When Leslie Linder cracked the code in 1958, he discovered detailed scientific observations about mushrooms and nature, along with early sketches of her famous characters. "It fulfilled a need not only to express herself, but to have something over which she, who was powerless in every other way, exercised absolute control," wrote Linda Lear in the biography *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature*. Lear also theorized: "It seems reasonable to conclude that her code writing was at least initially devised against the possibility that her mother might read it."

The Secret Puzzle Party

The International Puzzle Party represents another fascinating chapter in puzzle history. Founded by puzzle collector Jerry Slocum in 1978, it has continued to evolve as an exclusive, invitation-only annual forum for serious puzzle collectors to exchange and sell mechanical puzzles. As for the secrecy of the group? "Part of it is a little bit, for lack of a better word, paranoia," Nick Baxter, captain of the U.S. Puzzle Team, and current director and organizer of the International Puzzle Party, told Atlas Obscura. "Because there were some Chinese knock-off producers that tried to crash the party a couple of times, to basically get ideas." Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an award given online. There's also the Nob Yoshigahara Puzzle Design Competition, which is held in conjunction with International Puzzle Parties. Yoshigahara is famous for his "Cast Puzzle" series—intricate metal brain-teasers with six levels of difficulty that are designed to be disassembled and reassembled—and inspiring a new generation of creators.

The Decoded Message That Changed WWI

The Zimmermann Telegram stands as one of cryptography's most consequential breakthroughs. In 1917, British codebreakers cracked this encrypted German message and uncovered a secret proposal to Mexico suggesting an alliance against the United States. The decoded message helped draw America into World War I, demonstrating how a single solved puzzle could reshape global politics. "The United States," wrote Thomas Boghardt in his book *The Zimmermann Telegram: Intelligence, Diplomacy, and America's Entry into World War I*, "certainly would have entered World War I regardless of the telegram, but by removing [Woodrow] Wilson's final doubts about the wisdom of joining the Allies, it accelerated U.S. intervention, though perhaps only by a few weeks. A slightly later date of the U.S. declaration of war on Germany would not have affected the conflict's outcome, but it may well have had serious implications for London."

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

The Literary Detective

Edgar Allan Poe proved himself a master of both literature and cryptography. In 1841, he issued a challenge in a Philadelphia newspaper, claiming he could solve any substitution cipher that readers submitted. Over several months, he successfully decoded approximately 100 ciphers sent to him—save one that he dismissed as a hoax. He made his own, too. Poe "incorporated the puzzles into his writing—in his short story 'The Gold-Bug,' the location of a buried treasure is written in cipher on a parchment in invisible ink," wrote A.J. Jacobs, author of *The Puzzler*, in an article for *Mental Floss*.

IN 1952, MICHAEL VENTRIS CRACKED THE CODE OF THIS ANCIENT SCRIPT THAT HAD BAFFLED SCHOLARS FOR DECADES.

Michael Ventris first trained as an architect, potentially giving him an unique approach to puzzle-solving.

The Secret Society

The Copiale Cipher represents one of the most intriguing breakthroughs in modern code-breaking. This mysterious 105-page manuscript from the 1730s, written in 90 different cipher letters including Roman and Greek characters plus abstract symbols, kept its secrets for over 260 years. When computer scientists finally broke the code in 2011, they discovered the rituals of a German secret society called the "Oculists." This group, with a strong fascination for ophthalmology, was actually focused on political and religious freedom, and had elaborate ceremonies about vision and enlightenment as part of their secret meetings.

Cracking Linear B

In the realm of archaeological cryptography, the decipherment of Linear B stands as a monumental achievement. In 1952, Michael Ventris, an English architect and self-taught linguist, cracked the code of this ancient script that had baffled scholars for decades. Working from the research of American classicist Alice Kober, Ventris proved that Linear B was an early form of Greek, completely overturning accepted theories about ancient Greek origins. Tragically, Ventris died just four years later at the age of 34, shortly after his groundbreaking work.

Unlocking Mayan Mysteries

Another extraordinary breakthrough came with the decipherment of the Maya script, a puzzle that had confounded scholars for centuries. Russian linguist Yuri Knorozov made a crucial discovery by proving that many Mayan glyphs were syllabic in nature. His work transformed our understanding of Mayan civilization, bringing the words of ancient scribes to life, revealing a rich, complex history hidden for nearly two millennia.

These stories reveal humanity's enduring fascination with puzzles and secrets. Whether driven by political intrigue, the search for eternal life, personal privacy, or pure intellectual challenge, the art of creating and breaking codes remains woven into the fabric of civilization. These encrypted messages from the past continue to captivate modern minds, proving that a well-crafted puzzle transcends time. ☺

UNSOLVED PUZZLES

• **SOME OF** history's greatest minds have banged their heads against the world's most stubborn puzzles, and we're still waiting for answers. Take the Voynich Manuscript, a medieval book that's been driving scholars crazy since 1912. Bound in plain, unmarked parchment and measuring roughly 225 x 160 millimeters, this mysterious tome is written in an unknown script and filled with strange illustrations of plants that don't exist and women bathing in green liquid. Recent multispectral imaging has revealed hidden text and proved it was written between 1404 and 1438, but its roughly 38,000 words remain undeciphered despite having all the statistical patterns of a real language.

The CIA isn't immune to unsolved mysteries either: They've got one sitting right in their front yard. The Kryptos sculpture, installed in 1990 at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, is an S-shaped structure of curved copper plates that stands 12 feet tall and 20 feet wide, looking like a piece of paper coming out of a printer. The sculpture, set among red granite slabs and a reflecting pool, features four encrypted messages carved into its copper sheets. While codebreakers have cracked three of them, the fourth section (known as K4) continues to taunt the intelligence community. The sculptor, Jim Sanborn, cut nearly 2,000 letters into the verdigrised copper sheets, creating one of the world's most famous unsolved codes. And then there's the Dorabella Cipher, a mysterious 87-character message sent by composer Edward Elgar to a friend in 1897. The single page features semicircles with one to three curved lines attached to them, looking almost like whimsical musical notes. Despite being just one page, this musical master's code has resisted decryption for more than 125 years.

ANIMAL KINGDOM COMEDIANS

THESE EIGHT HILARIOUS BEHAVIORS SHOW NATURE'S INHERENT SENSE OF HUMOR

Nature isn't just about survival of the fittest—sometimes it's about who can put on the most entertaining show. Here are eight fascinating and funny behaviors that prove animals have a knack for comedy, all documented by researchers and zoologists around the world.

1. Bubble-Net Pranksters

Humpback whales aren't just massive marine mammals; they're underwater performance artists. These clever cetaceans create elaborate "bubble nets" by swimming in circles while releasing bubbles from their blowholes. This spiral of bubbles acts like an underwater corral, trapping confused fish who swim right into the whales' waiting mouths.

2. Orangutan Spa Days

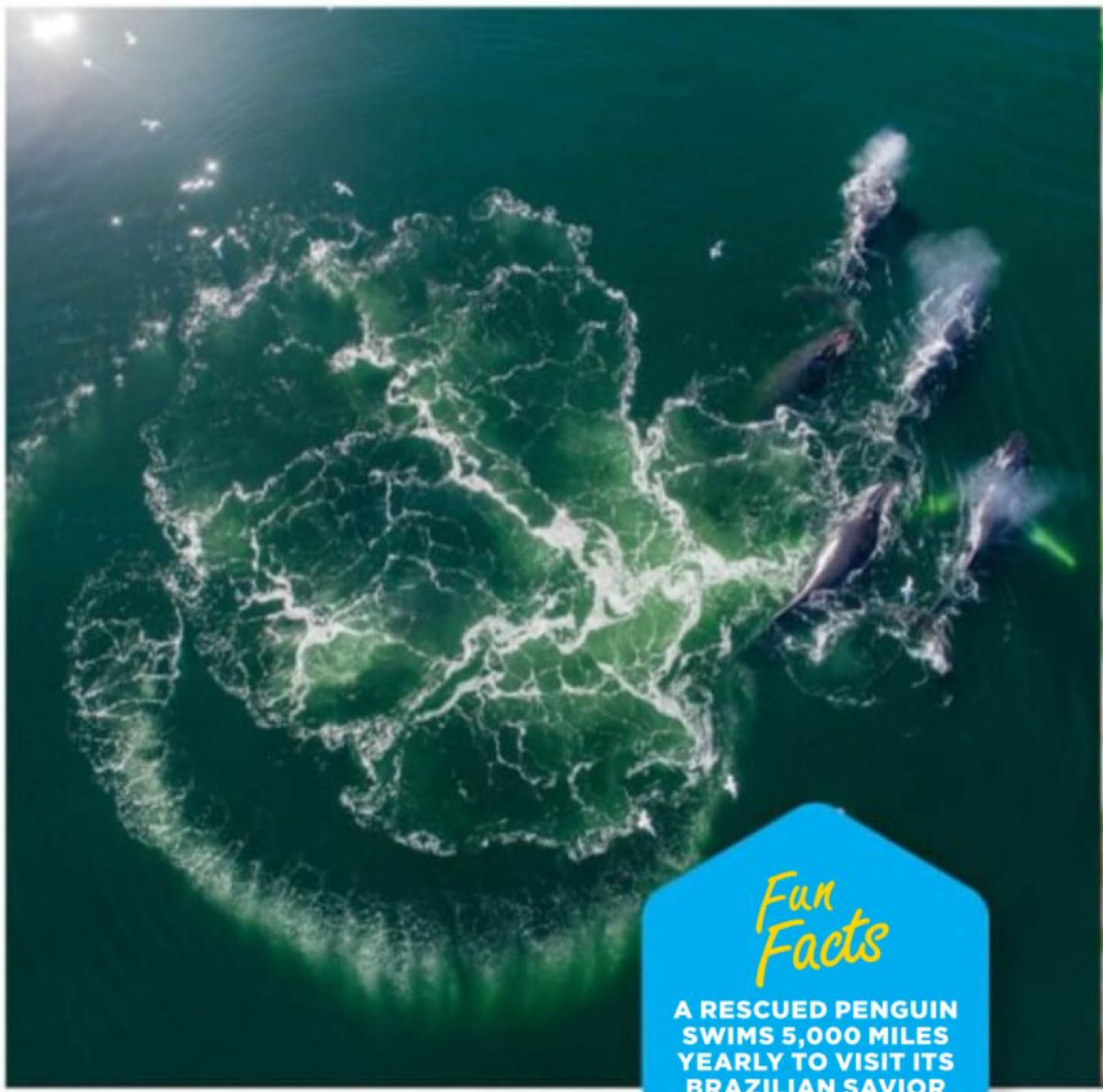
Scientists have observed wild orangutans creating their own herbal medicines. They've been seen chewing specific plants into a lather and using it as soap or insect repellent. Some have even been documented using leaves as rain hats or makeshift umbrellas, showing that good grooming knows no species barriers.

3. Vengeful Crows

Crows don't just hold grudges; they pass them on to their friends. These feathered intellectuals can remember human faces for extended periods and will alert other crows about people who've wronged them. But they're not all about revenge—they've also been documented bringing shiny "gifts" to humans who feed them regularly.

4. Crafty Dolphins

These marine masterminds have been caught red-handed, using their snouts and teeth to raid crab



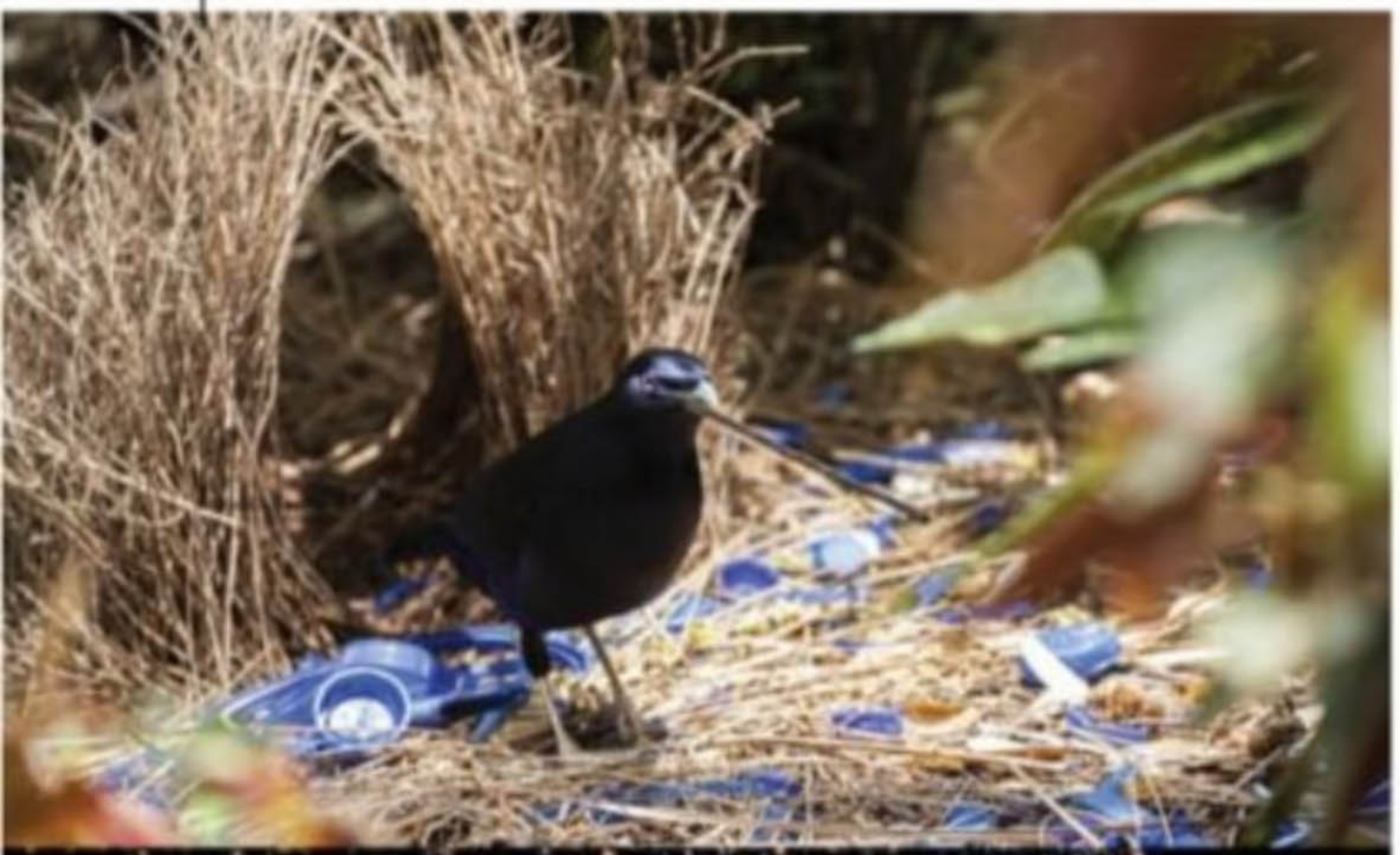
Fun Facts

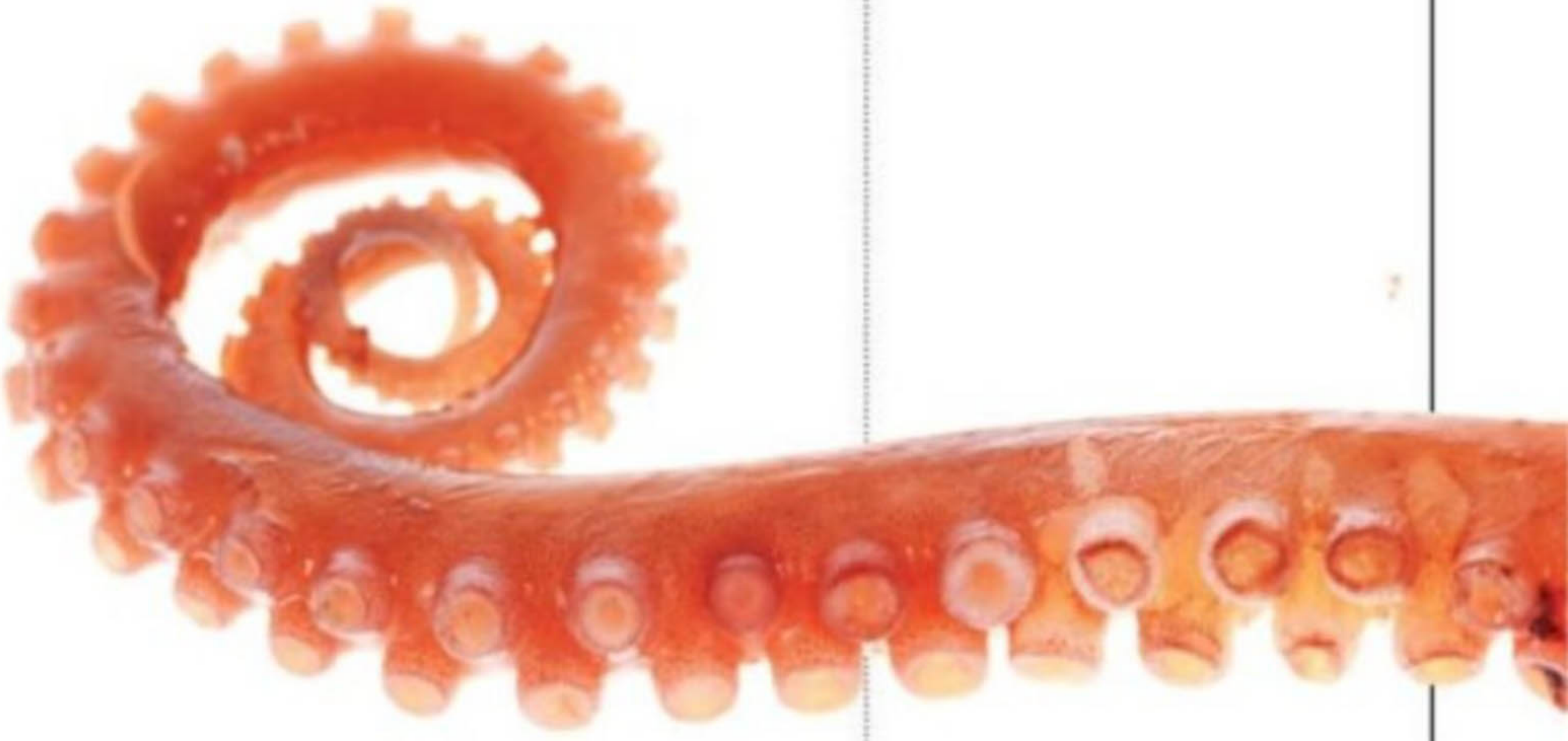
A RESCUED PENGUIN SWIMS 5,000 MILES YEARLY TO VISIT ITS BRAZILIAN SAVIOR

pots for fish used as bait. It's not just theft—it's a demonstration of their problem-solving abilities and opportunistic nature. They've even been known to teach these tricks to their pod mates, creating generations of seafood bandits.

5. Obsessive Decorators

Male bowerbirds are the interior designers of the bird world. These feathered perfectionists spend hours arranging and rearranging their collections of colorful objects—from flowers to bottle caps—to create the perfect bachelor pad. They're so particular that they'll even steal decorations from neighboring bowers if they think another male's display is getting too impressive. "In some cases the bower functions as an attracting device to females," noted Gerald Borgia, Ph.D., a biologist at the University of Maryland, College Park, in an interview with PBS. "But it also has an important role in modulating a male's display so the females can observe it from a comfortable position. It also provides a stage for the performance of the male…Once she's inside the bower it orients her in a way so as to maximize the appeal of the display he's giving."





6. Octopus Escape Artists

These eight-armed intellectuals are known for their Houdini-like escape abilities. Researchers have documented octopuses squeezing through impossibly small spaces, unscrewing jar lids from the inside, and even sneaking out of their tanks at night to raid neighboring aquariums for snacks before returning home.

7. Tipsy Bees

Ever seen a bee flying in zigzags? You might have witnessed what scientists call "ethanol intoxication." When bees stumble upon fermented tree sap or overripe fruit, they can actually get drunk. These inebriated insects show signs of disorientation, have trouble flying straight, and even fail to perform their signature waggle dance properly. Some bees even need to sleep it off before returning to the hive.

8. Parrotfish Pajamas

Every night, parrotfish secrete a mucus bubble around themselves before going to sleep. This transparent cocoon acts as a kind of sleeping bag that masks their scent from predators. It's like having an invisible force field—complete with built-in alarm system—that they rebuild every single night. "Remove the cocoon from a fish, and the number of parasites increases nine-fold," wrote Nancy Knowlton, Ph.D., author of *Citizens of the Sea*, in an online post for the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. "So the energy spent every night in making the cocoon, about 2.5 percent of the fish's daily energy budget, seems to be well worth it."

Dodgers
12
RUSSELL
18

THE HISTORY OF THE HIGH FIVE

HOW A SIMPLE CELEBRATION AT A BASEBALL STADIUM BECAME A CULTURAL PHENOMENON

On October 2, 1977, at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles, a simple celebratory gesture would change the way people express joy and triumph forever. It was the last day of the regular season when Dodgers left fielder Dusty Baker hit his 30th home run, which made the Dodgers the first baseball team to have four players hit 30 or more home runs in a season. As Baker crossed home plate, his rookie teammate Glenn Burke was waiting with his hand raised high above his head—and in that spontaneous moment, the world's first documented high five was born.

The high five caught on quickly within the Dodgers organization, becoming Burke's signature greeting and spreading throughout the team like wildfire. The gesture represented more than just celebration; it became a symbol of teamwork and camaraderie. "[Dusty Baker] and Glenn had a lot in common, and I think Dusty set a real tone as a leader in that clubhouse in accepting Glenn," said Andrew Maraniss, author of the book *Singled Out: The True Story of Glenn Burke*, in an interview with *The New York Times*. "He made a huge impact on the way Glenn was perceived in that clubhouse, even though most of the players knew he was gay. That might have thrown up a wall between him and the other players, but because Dusty Baker accepted him, he was accepted." Burke, known for his energetic personality and natural charisma, would often use the high five to pump up his teammates before games, helping to cement the gesture's place in sports culture.

While there are other claims to the high five's origin (including Magic Johnson, who says he invented it with his Michigan State teammate Greg Kelser) the Burke-Baker high five remains the most well-documented "first." The gesture's popularity exploded beyond baseball, spreading through sports, popular culture, and eventually becoming a universal symbol of celebration, agreement, and congratulation. One study from *Frontiers in Psychology* that evaluated praise's effect on children's motivation found something unique about high

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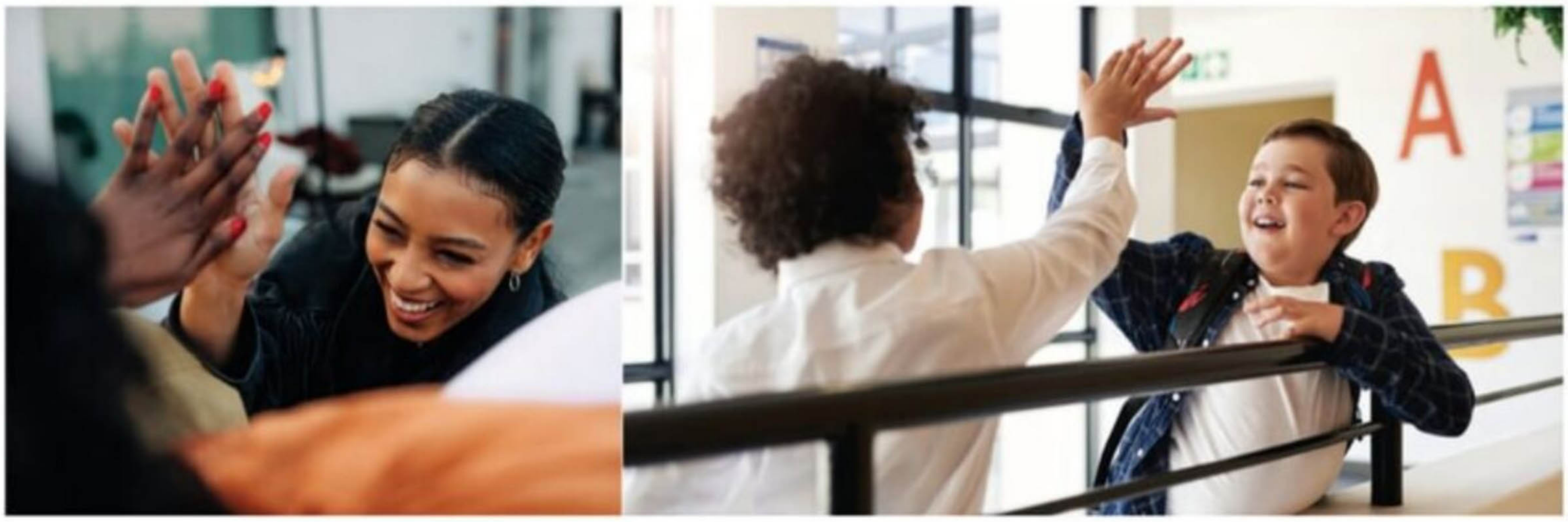


fives (gestural praise): “One of the most interesting and surprising findings was that children who received gestural praise felt more positive about themselves…than those receiving all other types of praise…Gestural praise (thumbs-up or high five) may be the optimal form of praise—as demonstrated by children’s increased persistence and positive feelings about themselves and their work.”

What makes this story particularly remarkable is how such a simple gesture had never been documented before 1977, despite centuries of human interaction. The high five seems so natural now that it’s hard to imagine a time when it didn’t exist. The moment at Dodger Stadium was the beginning of a legacy that continues to impact how we interact with each other nearly five decades later.

There’s actually a National High Five Day—it’s celebrated on the third Thursday in April each year.

CONNECTION CUSTOMS

• **AROUND THE** world, the simple act of saying hello to someone tells a fascinating story of human connection. In Qatar, friends greet by touching noses, while in Tibet, the traditional greeting involves sticking out your tongue—a custom that dates back to the 9th century. In Bali, people greet by pressing their palms together at heart level and saying “om swastiastu,” a Sanskrit phrase invoking divine blessings. In the Netherlands, France and parts of Eastern Europe, friends exchange three alternating kisses on the cheeks, and in Zimbabwe, a handshake comes with two rhythmic claps that vary slightly between men and women.

This spirit of unique greetings found its way into a Charlotte, North Carolina classroom in 2017, when fifth-grade teacher Barry White Jr. made headlines for creating personalized handshakes with each of his students. White memorized dozens of distinct greetings, ranging from simple fist bumps to elaborate multi-step routines. The practice spread to other classrooms, with teachers like Memphis educator David Jamison adapting the tradition even during the pandemic. Jamison creatively transformed his famous handshakes into no-contact greetings, maintaining the unique choreography for each student while wearing masks and keeping physical distance—proving that whether it’s an ancient cultural custom or a modern classroom connection, greetings remain a powerful way to acknowledge our shared humanity.

HEAD-SCRATCHING RIDDLES: ANSWER KEY

DID YOU GET THEM ALL?

So, how many did you solve without peeking at the answers? Don't worry if you didn't get them all—like any skill, riddle-solving gets better with practice. The more you solve, the better you'll get at spotting those sneaky wordplays and clever misdirections!

1. Answer: A map

2. Answer: A keyboard

3. Answer: A hole

4. Answer: A towel

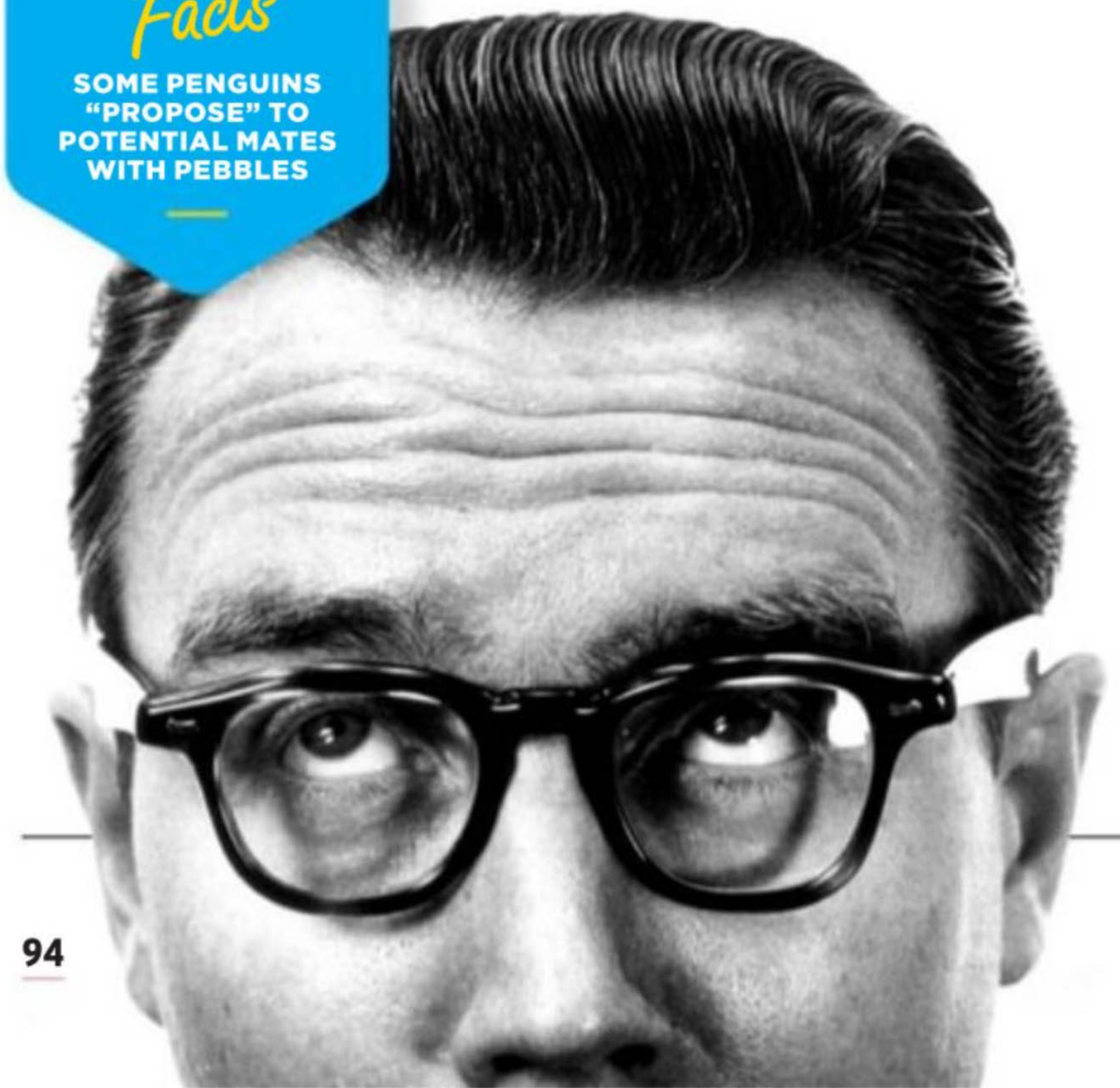
5. Answer: A table

6. Answer: A candle

7. Answer: Fire

Fun Facts

SOME PENGUINS "PROPOSE" TO POTENTIAL MATES WITH PEBBLES



8. Answer: Day and night

9. Answer: A coffin

10. Answer: The word "ton"

11. Answer: A stamp

12. Answer: A pencil lead

13. Answer: The future

14. Answer: Words

15. Answer: The human brain

16. Answer: Your heart

17. Answer: Silence

18. Answer: A piano

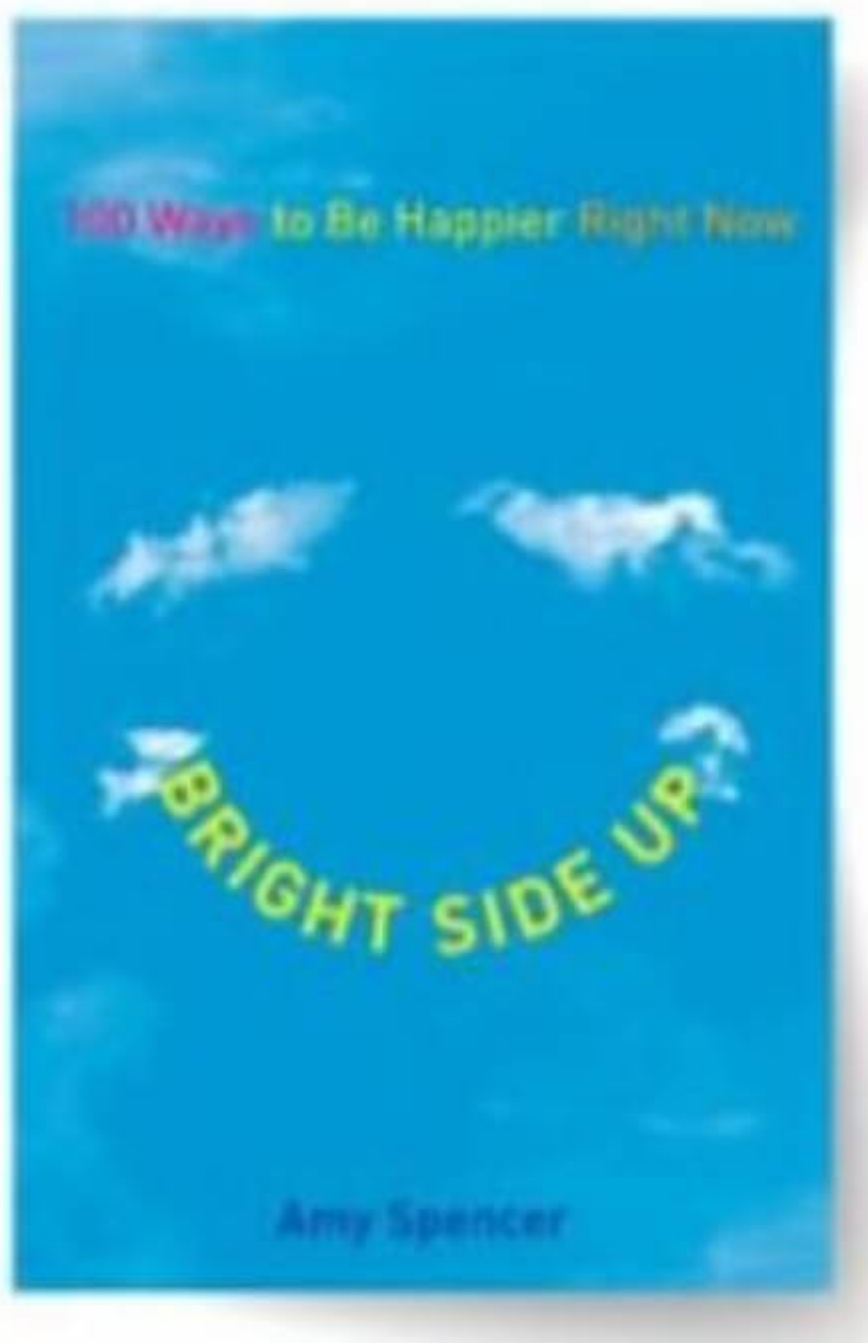
19. Answer: Counterfeit money

20. Answers: A needle; a hurricane

LOOKING FOR EVEN MORE HAPPINESS? TRY THESE

DIVE INTO THESE BOOKS, PODCASTS, COURSES, AND DOCUMENTARIES SURE TO MAKE YOU SMILE

Want to boost your happiness further? There's plenty of content out there that can help. Here's your curated guide to the best happiness-focused media, from page-turners to in-depth documentaries.


100 Ways to Be Happier Right Now
BRIGHT SIDE UP
Amy Spencer

Books That'll Brighten Your Day

- ***Bright Side Up*, by Amy Spencer:** *Bright Side Up* stands out for its practical approach to happiness. Instead of pushing major life changes, Spencer offers bite-sized strategies you can use right away. The book's genius lies in 100 small yet effective ways you can be happier—from "enjoy the cusp" to "ask, what *didn't* you lose?"

- ***The Science of Well-Being*, by Laurie Santos:** What makes this book fascinating is how it debunks common happiness myths, explaining how more money or a perfect job won't necessarily make you happier.

- ***The How of Happiness*, by Sonja Lyubomirsky:** This book brings scientific rigor to the happiness game. She's spent more than 20 years researching what actually makes people happy, and her findings might surprise you.

Podcasts to Listen to and Learn From

- **"The Science of Happiness"** from PRX and Greater Good Science Center stands out because they test happiness practices with real people. Each episode has a listener try out a research-backed happiness strategy, with often surprising results.

- **"Happier with Gretchen Rubin"** takes a different approach. Rubin and her sister Elizabeth Craft discuss practical happiness strategies while being refreshingly honest about their own struggles. What makes this show special is its "Try This at

GRETCHEN RUBIN

Fun Facts

SXSW ATTRACTED 700 ATTENDEES IN 1987; IN 2024 IT DREW MORE THAN 500,000 PEOPLE

Laurie Santos and Simran Jeet Singh (an author and professor) having a conversation onstage at the 2023 SXSW Conference and Festivals

Home" segment, where they suggest small, doable changes that listeners can implement immediately.

- **"The Happiness Lab"** with Dr. Laurie Santos (author of *The Science of Well-Being*) dives deep into the science of joy. Unlike many happiness podcasts, this one bucks conventional wisdom; one fascinating episode reveals why winning the lottery doesn't typically lead to lasting happiness.

Courses Worth Your Time

- **Yale's "The Science of Well-Being"** course deserves its viral status: It's been taken by more than 4 million people worldwide. What sets it apart is its practical homework assignments. Instead of just learning about happiness, you actually practice evidence-based techniques. The best part? It's completely free on Coursera.

- **Berkeley's "The Science of Happiness"** course offers a unique angle by focusing on social connections and kindness. They've found that students who complete the course show measurable increases in well-being, with effects lasting up to four months after completion.

- **Harvard's "Positive Psychology"** course, previously taught by Tal Ben-Shahar, became famous for being the university's most popular class. It stands out for its blend of academic research and practical applications, helping students understand both the "why" and "how" of happiness.

Documentaries That Inspire

- ***Happy* (2011)** remains relevant today for its global perspective on joy. The filmmakers traveled to 14 countries, from the slums of Kolkata to the beaches of Brazil, discovering that happiness often has little to do with material wealth.

- ***The Mind, Explained: Happiness* (2019)** on Netflix breaks down the science of happiness in a visually stunning way. What makes this documentary special is how it uses animation to illustrate complex brain processes, making the science accessible to everyone.

1,000 SMILES
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HEROIC KIDS | COSMIC KARMA
MINDFUL MOMENTS | AND A WHOLE LOT MORE

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THIS MAGAZINE IS DEDICATED TO MAKING YOU HAPPY RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW.